

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Argentine government  
takes aim at unions

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## Auto workers in Britain rally to protest layoffs

BY CAROLINE BELLAMY

BIRMINGHAM, England—In the biggest union demonstration in the United Kingdom in eight years, 80,000 people took to the streets here April 1 to protest threatened job losses at Rover Group's Longbridge car plant.

Some 50,000 workers in the area face redundancy (layoff) if the sale of Rover by BMW is finalized. The march was overwhelmingly made up of working people, as thousands of workers from the Longbridge car plant and its sister Land Rover plant were joined by others from the West Midlands and elsewhere.

A contingent of 30 workers joined the march from Ford's Dagenham plant in east London, which the auto giant has threatened to close. Fifty workers from Vauxhall cars in Ellesmere Port on Merseyside, and 25 from the Rover plant in Cowley, Oxford, were also present.

"We've got to stick together" said a Longbridge worker with 10 years at the plant. "That's why the miners and the dockers are here. They've been through it all themselves and they know."

Referring to the Rover workers, John, from Ford Dagenham, said, "If we can't support these people, who can we support? We need strong unions."

"This demonstration will help a lot," said Peter Nguen, who has been working at Longbridge for 10 years. "The more that we demonstrate, the more BMW and the government will know what we feel. We want to keep Rover open in the Midlands, and



An estimated 80,000 auto workers and their supporters rallied in Birmingham, England, April 1 to protests massive layoffs planned at Rover. Ford and Honda have also floated plans to cut production, threatening thousands more jobs.

not just for ourselves. A lot of people will be affected, not only at Rover."

BMW recently concluded a deal to sell Rover to Alchemy Partners, which has made clear that redundancies would be inevitable. Land Rover is to be sold to Ford in a £2

billion deal. BMW said losses of £2 million a day and Britain's reluctance to join the common European currency were the main factors in its decision to pull out.

Natalie, a young line worker with six

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## Municipal workers strike in Toronto

BY ROSEMARY RAY

TORONTO—City workers here went on strike March 31, catching city officials off guard after contract negotiations stalled.

Some 20,000 members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 79 are participating in the walkout. Many sport union buttons demanding "Equity & Respect," as part of their fight for "harmonization" of wages for union members and for the rights of part-time workers. Some of the many services shut down are day-care centers, public health, welfare, community recreation centers, and building inspections.

CUPE officials walked out of the negotiations and called the strike, scuttling hopes of Toronto mayor Melvin Lastman to bog down the union in endless behind-the-scenes contract talks. At a late night press conference on March 30, the mayor angrily stated, "The union is trying to hold the city hostage. We begged them this morning: 'Please don't strike.... Yet they had the nerve to walk out with no notice at all.'"

Equalizing wages, called harmonization here, is a central issue in the strike. There are a range of pay scales for municipal workers as a result of the creation of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) out of Toronto and six

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## Youth from many countries meet in Cuba

BY ARIS HARAS  
AND SAMANTHA KERN

HAVANA—"We are here to condemn imperialism as a system and to discuss how students can join the peoples of our continent to fight against it," said Hassan Pérez, national president of the Federation of University Students (FEU) of Cuba. He was addressing the opening session of the 12th

Congress of Latin American and Caribbean Students, which began on the evening of April 1 at the Karl Marx theater here.

More than 5,200 delegates from 36 countries were at the opening session. They included 1,000 students from Cuba and 1,500 students from around the world who attend the Latin American School of Medical Sciences in Havana. Hundreds of additional

delegates from countries other than Cuba arrived in subsequent days, bringing attendance to 6,300 by April 3.

Virtually every single country in the Americas is represented. Among the largest delegations outside Cuba are 600 from Venezuela and 400 from Mexico. For the first time in the history of these congresses, large delegations from North America—more than 250 from Canada, including 90 from Quebec, and over 80 from the United States—are present.

The gathering is sponsored by the Continental Latin America and Caribbean Students Organization (OCLAE). Student congresses in Latin America began in 1908. OCLAE was founded in 1963, inspired by the triumph of the Cuban revolution four years earlier and attempting to give the student movement in the Americas an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist direction.

OCLAE president Yosvani Díaz Romero opened the gathering. The statement by Cuban national hero José Martí that "our country is the Americas" is the framework of the deliberations of the congress, he said. Students in Latin America, he added, are united by a common struggle against neoliberalism and globalization. These are terms commonly used in Latin America to describe the imperial arrogance and domination and brutal assaults on human dignity the world over by Washington and other imperialist powers.

Other speakers at the opening session, which included a varied cultural program, were Evangelina Maldonado, speaking for the students of the Latin American School of Medical Sciences, and Ramón Cuadra, representing the University Federation for

Continued on page 5

## AFL-CIO holds event in New York on immigrant rights

BY PACO SÁNCHEZ

NEW YORK—The first of a series of public forums organized by the AFL-CIO on immigrant rights took place here April 1. A feature of the event was reports by immigrant workers involved in battles for decent wages, working conditions, and dignity on the job.

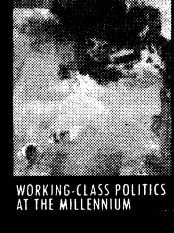
The event, to be followed by similar meetings April 29 in Atlanta, May 6 in Chicago, and June 10 in Los Angeles, was aimed at explaining the new AFL-CIO policy in favor of amnesty for the estimated 6 million undocumented workers in this country who would benefit from permanent resident status. The title of the conference was "Building Understanding, Creating Change: AFL-CIO Forum on Immigrant Worker Rights."

The meeting was attended by 250 people,

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Socialists register progress in building proletarian party — page 8

# Dispute continues over Cuban boy

BY ROLLANDE GIRARD

MIAMI—In the wake of the March 21 ruling by a federal judge against a lawsuit aimed at keeping Elián González in the hands of right-wing Cubans who are his distant relatives here, the factional debate within the U.S. ruling class has once again sharpened.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service set, then stepped back from, several deadlines for the Cuban-American family, to whom they gave custody of the six-year-old boy, to state their willingness to turn him over to federal authorities to be returned to his father who lives in Cuba.

Cuban rightists, usually numbering in the hundreds, have mobilized around the house where the boy is staying, making it clear the Clinton administration would have to use force to carry out the INS order. Saul Sanchez, the leader of the misnamed Democracy Movement, has trained protesters to form a chain around the house in preparation for blocking federal marshals and INS agents from taking the boy away.

The six-year-old Cuban boy was given temporary parole when he was found at sea on November 25 off the coast of Florida. He was one of three survivors of a smuggler-organized boat trip to Florida. His mother was among the 11 people on board who drowned. The INS gave him to the custody of his granduncle, Lazaro González, who has refused to sign a pledge to turn the boy over if he loses his appeal in federal court.

González says that he will surrender the child "but only if an independent psychological evaluation indicated it was in the boy's best interest."

Elián's father, Juan Miguel González, arrived in the United States April 6 accompanied by his wife and six-month-old son. At a news conference at Washington Dulles airport he said, "I am truly impatient to have him returned to me as soon as possible and go back to Cuba together immediately." He condemned rightist Cuban forces for trying to "obtain political advantage from this tragedy."

Several Congress members have proposed a bill to give Elián González permanent legal residency along with his father, his father's wife, his half brother and two grandmothers.

In a letter addressed to Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott and Senator Daschle, Juan Miguel González wrote, "Frankly, we are

surprised that someone can take upon himself such an initiative without our consent and without even consulting any of us. We want to make it clear that we are not in agreement and we hope the U.S. Senate does not approve the proposal."

The special legislation would allow the boy's fate to be decided not as a matter of immigration law, but as a normal child custody case in family court.

Albert Gore, U.S. vice president and candidate for the presidency, broke with the Clinton administration and spoke out in support of this legislation. "From the beginning, I have said that Elián González's case is at heart a custody matter." He added, "It is a matter that should be decided by courts...based on Elián's best interests."

Republican presidential front-runner George W. Bush said he hoped "the vice president's got enough influence in the administration to sway the attorney general and to sway the president" to put a stop to "this heavy-handed approach from our federal government."

The case has all along provided an opportunity for Democrats, Republicans, and the big business media to attack the Cuban revolution.

The *Miami Herald* ran a full-page ad April 1 titled, "Why is Elián's case different?" It said that in a "normal situation in any normal country in the world when a mother dies, children go with their father. They belong with him and should be with him." But this case is different, the paper wrote, "because Cuba is not a normal country.... Fidel Castro's totalitarian government commands parents to raise children to be communists, and directs children to report parents who do not."

In a March 22 editorial, the *Miami Herald* said, "The world must be clear in recognizing the villain of this piece: Fidel Castro," and concluded, "In Cuba, the parent is the state. Therein lies the tragedy."

In workplaces in Miami this is a daily discussion. "This is so frustrating," said sewing machine operator, Paulette. "I am 110 percent in favor of the child to return with



Cuban rightists mobilize outside home where Cuban boy has been staying.

his father. This is all politics," she said. "They say the kid won't have milk and food if he goes back but the child came here after living six years there and he was healthy."

Rollande Girard is a sewing machine operator.

## Wage, income gap persists in Latin America

BY HILDA CUZCO

In a blunt admission and with worries over social instability in what the U.S. rulers view as their "backyard," Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers told a meeting of the Inter-American Development Bank that "Latin America's economic success in recent years has not been associated with a reduction in inequality."

A United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America report indicates that 15 percent of the population live in extreme poverty, unchanged over the last two decades.

The Inter-American Development Bank reported as well that 150 million people in Latin America live on \$2 a day or less, and during the 1990s the gap between rich and poor widened.

Citing the extreme vulnerability of Latin American nations to shifts in the world economy, the bank report says that the "fiscal, financial, and exchange policies in the countries of the region have not yet built up a line of defense against shocks of external origin."

The bank makes \$7 billion in loans to

Latin American countries each year. Summers is advocating the bank conduct a review of its practices and raise interest rates to the wealthiest Latin American nations, adjusts its lending programs, and shift funds to what he called programs to increase educational levels and fight poverty.

Summers pushed for fewer loans to large infrastructural projects such as dams, but according to press reports was vague with specifics on programs to alleviate poverty.

The bank report notes Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Ecuador have seen their currencies devalued and their banking systems weakened. Ecuador, for example, has just

approved a "dollarization" plan, replacing the country's currency with the dollar.

The international lending institutions have been pushing implementation of fiscal and tax reforms in Latin America, and for governments there to carry out austerity programs against working people, including cutting social security and selling off to capitalists their national patrimonies.

The *New York Times* wrote of the meeting that the persistent poverty has "frustrated international financial officials," who expected "rapid economic growth" in Latin America "would lift all boats and ease social tensions more than it has."

## Housing crunch hits working people

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Despite the "booming" U.S. economy through the 1990s, a record number of low-income families, and especially those working full time with children, are not able to secure affordable housing.

A report issued by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) states that 5.4 million low-income families in the United States were paying more than half of their income for housing in 1997, or living in dilapidated units, a rise of 12 percent since the expansion of the U.S. economy began in 1991.

"The 5.4 million households counted by HUD include 12.3 million individuals considered so poor as to be one paycheck away from homelessness," states a *Wall Street Journal* article about the findings. "But the households are more likely than ever to include at least one full-time worker. The rent burden grew three times faster for working families than any other category." Especially hard hit are Black and Latino families with children.

"This is the highest need for affordable housing since we have been taking numbers," admitted Andrew Cuomo, secretary of housing and urban development.

The crisis has been compounded as landlords opt out of cheaper public housing programs, upgrade their units, and then boost the rents to levels that only middle class and more wealthy tenants can afford. According to the report, from 1991 to 1997 the number of "affordable-housing units" declined by 370,000.

This situation is compounded by a sharp decline in even the meager funds the federal government has made available to low income families. From 1995 to 1998, for example, Congress offered no Section 8 vouchers—rental subsidies that offset the cost of market rents—compared with 39,700 vouchers in 1994.

President William Clinton is requesting an additional 120,000 vouchers in his 2001 budget, a mere drop in the bucket compared to the desperate need of millions for much lower rents.

## THE MILITANT

### Keep up with the growing resistance

News from around the world keeps pouring in on strikes, protests, and struggles of workers and farmers. Youth are organizing actions against police brutality and in defense of affirmative action. Unionists are taking up the banner to defend immigrant rights and push back rightist attacks. Don't miss an issue!



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# A wave of strikes sweeps across Finland

BY CLAUDIO BURGOS  
AND CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

TAMPERE, Finland—Transport workers in Finland struck 140 companies March 29. The 11,000 bus and truck drivers, who are members of the AKT union, were demanding an agreement for about 400 bus drivers who have been on strike since February 25 at four small companies in this town in southern Finland. They were also fighting for a general contract for all bus and truck drivers in the transport union.

The employers responded by locking out 15,000 transport workers at 325 companies. On March 28 the bosses rejected a settlement proposed by a government mediator, arguing that wage increases were more than twice as much as other agreements this year.

In the weeks leading up to the walkout, the chemical and energy workers staged a nationwide one-week strike. They won a wage increase of 4 percent, exceeding the norm of 3.1 percent in other agreements this year.

To further strengthen the economic impact of the strike, AKT, which also organizes the dockworkers, blocked the loading and unloading of ships coming into the harbors in Finland.

The seafarers union weighed in with sympathy strikes on the transport of goods to and from Finland on Finnish ships. The paper workers union and the chemical and energy workers also called strikes, refusing to handle goods covered by the AKT strike.

Workers here in Tampere struck four private bus companies—Väinö Paunu, Länsilinjat, Ahonen & Lastunen, and Liikennilaitos—in opposition to split shifts and for extra pay when driving in the central part of the city. These companies handle long distance commuter traffic from central Tampere to communities around the town.

A city-owned company employing about 500 bus drivers covers local routes. They have better working conditions than the drivers working at the private companies and receive an extra payment, dubbed “Tampere extra” by the workers, for driving in the central parts of town.

Nearly all the drivers at the private companies have split shifts, something drivers at the city-owned company are exempt from after five years of service. The drivers at the city-owned company are organized by the municipal workers union.

Erkki Paasirova, who works at the public bus company, said, “All bus drivers in Finland should support each other, whatever union they belong to.” City bus drivers organized two one-day strikes in solidarity with workers at the private companies. Several drivers said between 15 and 30 strikers held daily pickets and other actions in the bus terminal at the center of Tampere and outside the struck company Väinö Paunu.

An agreement was reached April 3 between AKT and the employers in the transport industry for a three-year national contract. The proposal was made by the gov-

ernment mediator. The pact includes a 3.5 percent wage increase now, with a 1.4 percent hike in October. For the next two years, wage increases will follow the national average, with a 1.4 percent additional raise each October to compensate for expected wage increases in other industries above the national norm.

Maximum overtime hours will be limited to 14, down from 17 previously. The drivers at the four companies on strike since February 25 won the “Tampere extra.” Around 30,000 bus and truck drivers are covered by the contract.

A young bus driver interviewed at Väinö Paunu wasn’t satisfied with the new contract because, he said, no change was made in the divided workday, something he thought was the most important demand in the strike. “We check out the bus at 6:00

a.m. In the middle of the shift we have a several hours partly unpaid break. This can be between two and four hours, which means very long workdays, sometimes until 7:00 p.m.,” he said.

Another bus driver at Väinö Paunu, Jukka Lindfors, didn’t get the “Tampere extra” since he didn’t drive inside the center of town, but he was satisfied with the general wage raise.

In a related development, the paper workers union imposed an overtime ban February 17 as negotiations over a general agreement have stalled. They later authorized a strike by its 30,000 members that could begin April 11. Their demands exceed those of the chemical and energy workers union and the transport workers union.

Since March 2 white collar employees in the paper industry have maintained a ban on working overtime. The dockworkers or-

ganized by AKT are also still without a contract. Their demands include around the clock six-hour shifts in the harbors.

The AKT-organized bus and truck drivers who have a new contract still have the right to carry out sympathy strikes.

Unions organizing smaller numbers of workers have also called strikes that could begin in early April.

Seven hundred postal workers walked out in a one-day wildcat strike March 24, protesting privatization plans. Their union is discussing further protests.

*Claudio Burgos is a member of the Young Socialists in Stockholm. Carl-Erik Isacsson is a member of the metalworkers union in Södertälje. Dag Tirsén, a member of the metalworkers union in Stockholm, also contributed to this article.*

## Janitors strike for contract in Los Angeles



Militant/Carol Lesnick

Janitors rally in Los Angeles after striking 18 cleaning companies April 3. Service Employees International Union spokesperson Blanca Gallegos said 1,500 walked off the job in a fight for a new contract. They are demanding “a livable wage and a \$1 wage increase for each of three years of the new contract.” Gallegos said 500 more janitors were to join the strike April 5, and the action is spreading from downtown to other areas of the county. The union is planning a major action for April 7, which will be two pilgrimages, one from downtown and the other from Santa Monica, to Century City.

## European rulers target immigrant workers

BY PATRICK O’NEILL

Claiming to defend Italy as a “Christian model” and “bulwark of European civilization,” rightist politicians in Italy have unveiled a harsh new anti-immigrant bill. Opposition leader and former prime minister

Silvio Berlusconi of the Forza Italia party and Umberto Bossi of the Northern League introduced the bill, which describes immigrant workers as a “lumpen proletarian mass.”

The bill would lower immigration quotas, revoke relevant agreements with Third World nations, and allow the Italian coast guard to fire on boats they claim are smuggling immigrants into the country.

An estimated 2 million of Italy’s 57 million people are classified as immigrants. Many come from North Africa and Albania, and others from Asia. Some in the Italian ruling class call for more immigration as a way to drive down wages and undercut union resistance. Prime Minister Massimo D’Alema of the Democratic Party of the Left attacked the bill for its “isolationism.” Other opponents draw parallels with the policies of other rightist politicians like Jörg Haider in Austria, and Jean-Marie Le Pen in France.

In other European capitals, governments—including those in which social democratic parties are dominant—are also taking aim at immigrants’ rights. The British Labour government of Anthony Blair has just enacted an Immigration and Asylum Act expressly designed to make applications for asylum more difficult. Under this legislation those seeking asylum will receive vouchers worth around \$58 per person every week, in place of cash benefits. A detention center for applicants has been opened. Those whose cases are considered weaker can be sent to prison.

The number applying for asylum in the United Kingdom grew from 5,900 in 1987 to 71,160 in 1999. Using a similar law, the German capitalist rulers lowered the number of asylum applications there from

166,000 in 1995 to 90,000 last year.

The British rulers especially aim this law—which comes on top of immigration laws that are already severely restrictive—at immigrants of Roma, or gypsy, nationality. Politicians and the capitalist media slander Roma as “beggars.”

The governments of Belgium, Denmark, and Sweden are among others in Europe that deny asylum to the Roma. Described as a “stateless people,” the Roma live throughout central and eastern Europe and number at least 8 million. They are subject to systematic and vicious discrimination. A *New York Times* article summarized the opinion of Claude Cahn of the European Roma Rights center in Budapest: “All European societies regard the darker-skinned Roma as alien.”

The prime minister of the former Slovakian government described Roma as “mental retards.” Amnesty International has prepared a report describing “punitive” raids by police using dogs against Roma settlements in Slovakia.

In the town of Avlovce Nad Uhom, Roma interviewed by the *New York Times* described facing discrimination by local merchants and violence by rightist skinhead gangs.

This discrimination is intensifying as the economic crisis worsens throughout much of eastern Europe. Slovak government representative Vincent Danihel said that Roma unemployment stands at “between 90 and 100 percent.”

“We want to work, but there is no work,” said Cyril Horvath in Udnany, Slovakia. “When you show up, they take one look at you, and that’s it. They take only whites.”

“And they’re surprised that Roma go abroad?” commented one Roma man.

## German unions agree to low wage hike

BY HILDA CUZCO

Several major unions in Germany have settled for low wage increases. German workers face an unemployment level of 11 percent and threats of mass layoffs, especially in the railways.

IG Metall, Germany’s largest trade union, struck a deal March 28 with the bosses in North Rhine-Westphalia state, agreeing to a meager 3 percent wage increase starting May 1, followed by a 2.1 percent raise the following year. The union represents 3.4 million workers and has traditionally set the pace in industrial agreements.

Its officials had demanded a 5.5 percent pay raise, as well the lowering of the retirement age from 65 to 60, with full benefits. Instead, the agreement allows 57-year-old workers to become part-time at 70 percent of pay, then to stop reporting to work at age 60 while remaining on the payroll through age 63.

In addition, the employers cheered a clause that fixes the workweek at 35 hours until 2003. The union has sought a 32-hour week. “We have industrial peace in the metal industry for three years,” said Werner Stumpfe, the leader of the Gesamtmetall industry federation.

The government and the bosses have welcomed the pact and treated it as a victory. Martin Leutz, a spokesman for Gesamtmetall, said the union was waking

up to the new economic era. “It looks like they finally caught on with what needs to be done,” he said. “They are finally facing reality.” Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder was also pleased with the results.

The union’s strong stance for setting the pace in labor demands was eroded after another, smaller, union, the IG BCE chemical workers, settled for low wage hikes. Formed last year, the chemicals and energy workers union is a merger of three smaller organizations and has 950,000 members.

The new contract covers 580,000 chemical workers and includes a wage increase of only 2.2 percent. The bosses are using this settlement to undermine union strength in the metal industry and to set a precedent for other labor sectors.

The main German railway union is facing threats from Deutsche Bahn AG to downsize and increase production. After threatening strikes last week, the union backed away from this course of action. Claiming losses of \$85 million last year, the bosses announced plans to cut 252,000 jobs in the next four years and add \$1.8 billion to its coffers.

The public sector union, with 1.9 million members, is next in upcoming labor talks. One of its leaders, Herbert Mai, expects a very difficult time in negotiations with the bosses.

# Meat workers union wins right to picket New York City shops

BY MITCHEL ROSENBERG

NEW YORK—Workers at this city's meat, fish, and produce markets have won the right to picket directly adjacent to the shops at which they work, reversing draconian antiunion legislation in place here since 1997.

The new rules cover workers at the Hunts Point Produce and Cooperative markets in the Bronx, the Gansevoort Meat and Fulton Fish Markets in Manhattan, and the Brooklyn Terminal and Wholesale Meat markets. Thousands of workers in these markets process and distribute food for thousands of restaurants and stores across the city.

New York's wholesale markets are on city-owned land. But the 1997 bill granted the employers inside the markets an exemption from pickets as if they owned the property. In addition, the new bill reverses another feature of the 1997 law that threatens prosecution of individual workers forced by their bosses to use shoddy equipment, such as forklifts, which result in accidents.

Rudolph Giuliani, the city's mayor, campaigned for the 1997 measure on the pretext of eliminating "mob control" of the markets. Officials of the three union locals that organize market workers have been convicted of various corruption charges over

the last decade, giving opponents of labor an opening to attack the democratic rights of union members.

At the time, before the city council passed the original bill, the New York City Central Labor Council negotiated with the Giuliani administration to eliminate additional onerous conditions initially proposed, such as fingerprinting market workers. The union officials then backed the final version.

The legislation coincided with changes in the organization of the meatpacking industry here. The historic "meatpacking district" in lower Manhattan is being transformed into an upscale section of condominiums and stores. The bosses are taking advantage of moving to the Hunts Point area to try to rid themselves of the union.

Workers at the markets are members of two locals of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Many, however, are not organized. The picketing restrictions have been supported by the owners of the food businesses, who have fought to eliminate unions from the industry, or at least reduce their power.

In 1998, a staff organizer for the UFCW was prevented from entering the Hunts Point market. This incident touched off the effort

## Machinists walk out in Miami

BY RACHELE FRUIT

MIAMI—"We took the step. From now on we stick together. That's it."

"We belong to the union now. When the union says we go back, we all go back together." This was typical of the statements by workers April 4, the first day of a strike against AeroThrust Corporation, a jet engine repair facility on the edge of Miami International Airport. The strikers are members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 1126.

With signs in English and Spanish, 110 union members picketed the plant, with the sound of horns in support of the union blaring on a busy thoroughfare on the north side of the airport.

Honking tractor trailer drivers, many organized by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, helped to keep the picket line spirited all day. Some were car haulers and some of the drivers, from Maersk and Seaboard, for example, were among those who helped shut down the port of Miami in February. Metro bus drivers expressed their solidarity too, as did hundreds of workers in their cars.

The union membership voted down the company's last contract offer March 31 by a 132-26 margin. The main issues in dispute are wages, health insurance, hours of work, and protection of seniority rights. The workforce is in a mood to fight.

The bosses are on a drive to implement a new flexible shift system, with work going on seven days a week. For the first time,

## New York Labor Council condemns cop killings

The New York City Central Labor Council issued a formal statement last week on the recent police killings in the city. "Two unarmed working men have been shot and killed by police officers," it read, referring to Patrick Dorismond and Amadou Diallo. "It's time we discuss the policies that led to those tragedies," stated the letter to Mayor Rudolph Giuliani from council president Brian McLaughlin.

The statement said Dorismond was first and foremost a worker "shot and killed while his family waited for his return from work." McLaughlin also scored the city's decision to release police records of Dorismond in an attempt to smear him: "And now, to have the court-sealed record of a teen revealed by the mayor of our city, is not only reprehensible and unconscionable...in demeaning a dead man, but it's also a dereliction of his civic responsibilities—and an affront to the working class of our city."

workers could be scheduled to work Saturday and Sunday at straight time, and, with five days notice, the hours of work could be changed as well. In a direct attack on the union, the contract language does not even guarantee that these moves would be done according to seniority.

"It's not a good idea to get pushed around from one shift to another. What about our families?" said Julio Lasalle. Cal Aimes, a 32-year-old mechanic, said, "My personal feeling is that the contract is a big insult. I know they can do better. Flexible shifts won't work. Many people have a second job. If they paid enough to begin with, we wouldn't need the second job."

Over the last eight years, workers received 90 cents an hour in direct wage increases. The proposed \$2.55 over the next four years "is just not enough to catch up," said Aimes.

Another provision in the proposal is an increase in health insurance premiums by 5 percent each year, so that by the fourth year workers would be paying \$46 per week for a plan that pays only 80 percent of the bills. And that's for continually deteriorating coverage. Robert Hall, a 34-year-old mechanic who has worked at AeroThrust for seven years, said his biggest concern "is the disability insurance. I was out for eight weeks, and I know. After taxes, union dues, and 401K were deducted, I was clearing \$20 a week. Management pays the same premium but they get paid more. Anyone can get hurt. Everybody's family is important."

A stock clerk with 12 years in the plant offered his opinion. "Between the last contract and this one people have got more educated. They realize that the system is more for them—the people running the show—and nothing for the workers. And I have a lot more to lose this time, with my new house. I'm willing to take a much bigger risk. I'm willing to let it close down if they don't agree to fair pay and benefits. This management thinks we can't live without them."

The parent company of AeroThrust, Celcius Group of Sweden, was recently bought by Saab, which has indicated that they want to sell off the aircraft maintenance sector, so the future of the company is unknown.

Three Teamster union members on strike and fighting for a union at Overnite trucking company showed up to give solidarity, promising more strikers would join the next day. These workers have been on the picket line for nearly six months.

*Rachele Fruit, a member of International Association of Machinists Local 1126, is on strike.*

## Hundreds protest cop violence in New York



High school students demonstrated in the Bronx April 4 against police brutality. The following day hundreds of young people took to the streets of Manhattan, marching from Union Square to City Hall, to demand that the cops who shot Amadou Diallo, Patrick Dorismond, and other youth be brought to justice.

by the unions to reverse the antilabor legislation. The City Council passed the new law February 29, then, following Giuliani's veto of it, overturned the veto March 29. The mayor says he is considering an appeal of the decision.

During a strike at the Hunts Point meat market during the fall of 1999 by UFCW Local 174 members against beef processor Plaut and Stern, pickets were restricted to the gate outside the market. Strikers were challenged to identify trucks carrying struck work and cars shuttling scabs, but prevailed after three weeks.

Plaut and Stern sought to eliminate the union from the shop, but a contract was signed similar to ones that cover other

UFCW shops in the market.

Keith Hatfield, a UFCW 174 member who works at lamb and veal packer B. Rosen & Sons near Plaut and Stern, helped mobilize solidarity picketing among his co-workers during the fight last fall.

He pointed out the hypocrisy of Giuliani's mob-baiting by noting that "anybody can come in" to the market easily. Hatfield also affirmed that the former law "is antiunion" and the reversal should be welcomed by all supporters of the labor movement.

*Mitchel Rosenberg is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 174 and works at B. Rosen & Sons in the Hunts Point market.*

## Miners protest layoffs in China

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Some 20,000 miners and their families took to the streets in the Chinese town of Yangjiazhangzi 250 miles northeast of Beijing to protest mine closures and minimal severance pay.

For three days they barricaded streets and organized to defend themselves against police and several hundred army troops dispatched to the area, in what the *Washington Post* calls "one of the most explosive known incidents of urban labor unrest in years." According to an April 4 BBC report, the action occurred in February but was hushed up by the Chinese government.

The mine, which was closed last November, produced molybdenum for the electronics and aerospace industries. This state-owned enterprise was the country's largest nonferrous mine. Many workers there had not been paid since early last year.

"It's so obvious that the leaders are [cheating] us," said Wang Jian, 56, who has worked at the mine since he was 19. "They have sold parts of the mine to their friends. They have sold all the mine's trucks. But we haven't seen this money. There is no open accounting."

In February, the mine announced a severance package that would pay each worker \$68 for each year worked at the mine, but workers would have to pay back large portions of this to cover social security and health insurance. Zhang Jianguo, 53, who together with his wife worked 35 years at the mine, received \$2,380, but after subtracting these deductions ended up with only \$500.

Coal miners in the southwestern province of Sichuan have also been organizing protests against layoffs. Some 500 miners there blocked rail traffic on the Guiyang-Kunming railway for several hours on April 1 after it was announced that the Liuzhi mine where they worked had gone bankrupt, threatening the jobs of 40,000 people.

At least 10 similar protests have erupted on the railway lines in recent months. Last December some 10,000 workers stopped rail traffic for half a day.

Labor Minister Zhang Zuoji said last

month that 11.5 million workers could lose their jobs by the end of the year as the Stalinist-led government continues its policy of introducing "market reforms" in the workers state. The World Bank estimates that of the 140 million workers in the state-owned sector, as many as 35 percent could be fired.

### Young Socialist Fund Drive March 15-June 1

City	Goal
Birmingham	450
Chicago	800
Detroit	550
Fresno	200
Kent	350
Los Angeles	450
Miami	400
Newark	700
New York	1000
Philadelphia	500
Seattle	350
Tucson	200
Total	5,950

The Young Socialists (YS) is an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the Young Socialists, call (718) 398-7852, or send an e-mail to: [young\\_socialists@hotmail.com](mailto:young_socialists@hotmail.com)



# 'Militant' supporters sell subs, meet fighters

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

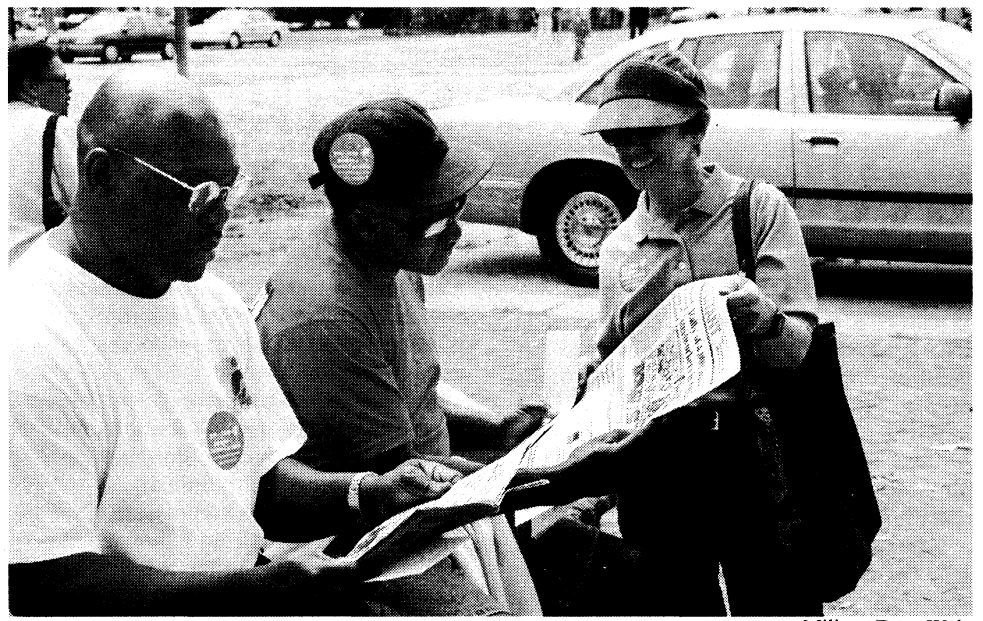
Reports from a number of supporters of the campaign to win new readers of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* indicate we are off to a good start in several areas. Many participants joined labor solidarity actions, protests against cop brutality, and other actions where they met fighters interested in subscribing to the socialist press and getting Pathfinder literature.

"Last weekend we sold 10 *Militant* subscriptions and three subs to *Perspectiva Mundial* and more than \$100 in Pathfinder literature," wrote Malcolm Clifton and Al Driver in Los Angeles. "On Saturday, one team of supporters sold two *Militant* subscriptions after joining a protest in San Bernardino against the hiring of Paul Bugar, a cop fired by the Riverside Police Department for his involvement in the shooting

death of 19-year-old Tyisha Miller."

More than 200 people were at the march, which was the second demonstration against this decision. Jonathan Lee, a 16-year-old student who attends San Bernardino High School, spoke for many when he said, "I'm afraid that some of my friends could also get killed by a cop because of what happened to Tyisha. I think that marching can make a difference and win justice in the future."

As the chart shows we are slightly behind schedule. This is partly due to supporters in some areas not sending in subscriptions by Tuesday at noon so they can be tabulated for the scoreboard. We urge participants in the drive to send subs in as soon as possible along with reports of sales activities. Stories like the one that follows show where *Militant* supporters are deepening



Militant/Dave Wulp

Sales got off to a good start at actions in South Carolina, above, and Los Angeles.

their work among farmers and linking it with reaching out to students on campuses who are thirsty for revolutionary literature.



BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

ATLANTA—We got off to a solid start the first week of the drive, selling 4 *Militant* subscriptions, 2 *PM* subs, and 4 copies of *New International*. We set up Pathfinder literature tables at meetings addressed by farmers who were part of a February fact-finding trip to Cuba. Their presence provided a good opportunity to introduce people to the *Militant*, and other socialist literature.

A young farmer who is a participating in the OCLAE conference in Cuba bought a copy of *New International*. At a recent meet-

ing at Spelman College participants in the farmers' trip to Cuba, Lee Dobbins and Gladys Williams, spoke on a panel concerning global activism. We sold two copies of the *New International* along with a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* at that event.

A student at the meeting also picked up a copy of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*. "Che is the man!" she said, pledging to bring up using the book for study by the campus Sociology Club. Three people wanted to buy the two copies of the book we had brought.

At a People's Tribunal meeting in Valdosta, Georgia, where Willie Head, a vegetable farmer, made a presentation on the Cuban revolution to more than 100 people, we sold a number of Cuba titles, including *Che Guevara Talks To Young People*.

## Cuba youth conference

Continued from front page

the Independence of Puerto Rico. Cuadra said that the colonial domination of Puerto Rico is the most "naked and brutal expression of U.S. imperialism." He got a standing ovation when he called on delegates to organize solidarity with youth and the vast majority of the people of the Caribbean nation in their struggle to prevent the U.S. Navy from resuming its bombing practices in Vieques.

Cuban president Fidel Castro and other representatives of the Cuban government and leadership of the Communist Party of Cuba attended the opening of the conference.

The delegates are housed in the dormitories of three schools—the Polytechnic Institute José Antonio Echevarría (CUJAE), the Lenin School, and the Salvador Allende Academy of Teachers. More than half arrived one or several days prior to the opening of the congress. Coming from different countries, or a number of cities in the same country, they took the opportunity to get to know each other and have a variety of political discussions.

At the CUJAE, for example, delegates from Quebec took the initiative to hold a roundtable open forum on Quebec independence over two nights March 29-30. More than 200 students took part, mostly from Canada, but also from Cuba, Angola, Mexico, the United States, and other countries.

The debates were organized after a few delegates from Canada vehemently objected to the widespread use of the Quebecois flag, which delegates from Montreal had hung visibly from several dorm rooms.

Delegates began work in six commissions on April 2 for three days. They are discuss-

ing and adopting resolutions, among others, extending their solidarity to revolutionary Cuba, defending public education and opposing race and sex discrimination in school admissions, condemning destruction of the environment, and supporting struggles to advance equality for women.

Editora Abril, the publishing house of the Union of Young Communists (UJC) in Cuba, has made a special effort to make widely available and promote the Spanish-language edition of the book *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* at the congress. The book is sold at the special price of \$6 from UJC literature tables and Editora Abril booths at all school facilities where delegates are staying and at all the conference sessions. The title, containing speeches by Ernesto "Che" Guevara, the Argentine-born leader of the Cuban revolution, was published in January by Pathfinder Press in collaboration with Editora Abril.

On April 2, Editora Abril distributed to delegates attending three of the commissions that meet every day at the convention palace a brochure featuring this title and advertising a promotional presentation of the book after lunch that day.

More than 1,000 delegates were present for that event. Armando Hart Dávalos, a founder of the July 26 Movement and leader of the Cuban revolution who wrote the preface to the book, spoke about *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*. "Even though the world has changed from the early 1960s, and Che might have spoken differently to youth today, one is struck by how relevant these talks are to what you are discussing at this congress," Hart said.

During the gathering, delegates are also visiting hospitals and schools, the pioneers center, Expo Cuba, and other sites in Havana. One of the most interesting parts of the program was visits to Cuban neighborhoods one evening, and dinners with hundreds of Cuban families, organized by the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution.

On April 3, delegates joined thousands of Cuban students, workers, and others in a 15,000-strong rally on the Malecón, opposite the U.S. Interests Section. The event was held as part of a series of often daily protests demanding Elián González, a six-year-old Cuban boy, be returned to his father in Cuba. Elián was rescued off the Florida coast last November after his mother and others on board a small boat drowned when it capsized after leaving Cuba.

The Cuban government has supported the demand of the boy's father and other relatives in Cuba that Elián be returned to his country. The boy is still in the United States, where distant relatives in Miami are trying to keep him with the encouragement and support of many among the U.S. rulers.

The April 3 event also served as the inauguration of the José Martí Open Anti-Imperialist Tribunal. It is a plaza built over the last two months as a byproduct of the protests demanding Elián's repatriation. The congress concludes April 5.

Brian Taylor contributed to this article.

Where we stand		
Mil	PM	NI
Week	7	
Week	6	
Week	5	
Week	4	
Week	3	
Week	2	
Week	1	

Militant/PM Subscription Drive March 25-May 21						
Country	Militant		% Goal	PM		NI
	Goal	Sold		Goal	Sold	
Sweden	12	2	17%	4		6
Australia	12	1	8%	1		5
New Zealand						1
Christchurch	12	2	17%	1		3
Auckland	20		0%	1	1	3
N.Z. total	32	2	6%	2	1	6
United States						
St. Louis	15	4	27%	5		10
Chippewa Falls	15	3	20%	10	4	10
Seattle	40	7	18%	12		12
Philadelphia	35	5	14%	10		15
Chicago	40	5	13%	15		15
Cleveland	25	3	12%	8		5
Atlanta	30	3	10%	10		12
Cape Girardeau	12	1	8%	4		4
Newark, NJ	65	5	8%	25	6	25
Allentown	15	1	7%	2		5
Birmingham, AL	45	3	7%	5		15
Des Moines	30	2	7%	15		10
Miami	40	2	5%	15		20
Pittsburgh	25	1	4%	2		8
Los Angeles	60	2	3%	30	7	30
Boston	35	1	3%	10		15
San Francisco	50	1	2%	20	1	25
Upper Manhattan	55	1	2%	20		20
New York Garment Dist	60	1	2%	20		20
Brooklyn	55		0%	10		25
Charlotte	10		0%	3		5
Detroit	45		0%	8		15
Fort Collins	10		0%	1		2
Fresno	12		0%	8		6
Houston	35		0%	15		12
Twin Cities	35		0%	8		10
Washington, DC	30		0%	10		11
Other		2				
U.S. total	924	53	6%	301	18	362
Canada						
Toronto	25	2	8%	5	2	20
Vancouver	25	1	4%	5		15
Montreal	16		0%	6		15
Canada total	66	3	5%	16	2	50
France	4		0%	4		20
Iceland	5		0%	1		
United Kingdom						
London	40		0%	8		20
Manchester	25		0%	2		2
UK total	65		0%	10	0	22
Infl totals	1120	61	5%	339	21	471
Goal/Should be	1100	132	12%	300	37	450

Militant /PM Sub drive in the Unions			
	Militant	PM	NI
	Goal	Goal	Goal
United States			
IAM	45	10	20
UFCW	50	30	25
UTU	32	3	10
UNITE	35	25	16
USWA	40	3	16
UAW			
U.S. total	202	71	87
IAM—International Association of Machinist; UAW—United Auto Workers; UFCW—United Food and Commercial Workers; UNITE—Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; USWA—United Steelworkers of America; UTU—United Transportation Union			

# New government in Argentina steps up assault on unions

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

The new government of Fernando de la Rúa is moving legislation through the Argentine congress that will deal a blow to the unions. This "labor reform" bill would gut industry-wide bargaining, extend probation for new employees, and end the automatic renewal of union contracts when negotiations fail.

After the government threatened to eliminate the unions' control of their membership dues, the dominant wing of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) officialdom consented to the takebacks. This latest crisis of the labor officialdom led to its fracturing. A section of the bureaucracy has set up a parallel CGT, taking its distance from the government in order to stem anger among the ranks.

De la Rúa was inaugurated December 10 at the head of the so-called Alliance, an electoral coalition of the traditional liberal Radical Party and another bourgeois formation called FREPASO. It defeated the Peronist party, which under the presidency of Carlos Menem had governed Argentina for more than a decade. While De la Rúa did not offer any major policy differences with Menem's party, many voters viewed him as a new face and lesser evil.

From day one, De la Rúa has worked overtime to satisfy the demands of foreign investors and creditors as well as domestic capitalists. Big business has called for slashing the social wage and other gains won by the working class over decades of struggle.

The rulers of Argentina are striving to improve their competitiveness in relation to capitalists in neighboring Brazil. U.S. and other foreign capitalists have clamored for "labor flexibility" and "reducing the budget deficit," which means gutting union power and cutting social entitlements.

Last year the Argentine economy shrank by 3 percent, in a recession aggravated by Brazil's devaluation. About 60 manufacturers, including foreign auto and rubber companies, have transferred production from Argentina to Brazil in recent months, seeking lower wages and better tax breaks. The Argentine ruling class is seeking to recapture some of this lost foreign investment.

## De la Rúa steps up assault

In his first month in office, De la Rúa pushed through Congress a package of budget cuts and consumer tax hikes affecting mainly working people and the middle classes. He restricted funding for the impoverished provinces. The International Mon-

etary Fund rewarded the government with a \$7.4 billion loan. Argentina's foreign debt is now equal to half its gross domestic product.

In another salvo, the president issued a decree in January ending union control of the workers' health-care fund, putting it in the hands of the health ministry.

In face of government pressure, CGT officials backed away from a threatened general strike over the antilabor bill. They accepted De la Rúa's blackmail offer of agreeing to the "labor reform" in exchange for the government dropping its threat to eliminate the labor movement's control over union dues. The lower house of Congress approved the bill February 24. It now awaits a vote in the Senate.

The bill would end industry-wide bargaining, which workers won through their battles to organize powerful industrial unions following World War II. Employers would be able to negotiate agreements plant by plant. Industry-wide bargaining has already been undermined over the years by concession contracts in auto and other industries.

The measure would give employers more leeway to fire workers by lengthening probation for new employees—from one month to six, with bosses having the option to extend it another six months. The law would also end the automatic renewal of union contracts during negotiations after the expiration of existing contracts.

## Fracturing of union federation

The day Congress approved the antilabor package, a dissident wing of the CGT officialdom, headed by truckers union president Hugo Moyano, organized a demonstration to repudiate it. Some 20,000 angry workers turned out. The Argentine Workers Federation (CTA), a smaller trade union organization, held a separate protest. Both criticized the top leadership of the CGT headed by Rodolfo Daer.

On March 16 the breakup of the main trade union federation was formalized when the Moyano wing held a meeting of 600 delegates and voted to declare a parallel CGT, denouncing the other wing with militant-sounding rhetoric. Despite talk about desiring unity, the leaderships of both CGTs have since been maneuvering to take over the union headquarters.

While wealthy investors are toasting to rosy prospects for them, the majority in Argentina face deteriorating social and economic conditions. Unemployment stands

## Truckers resist pay cut in Australia



A convoy of 25 trucks circled the headquarters of concrete giant Boral and paralyzed traffic in downtown Sydney, Australia, March 31. The truckers were protesting the bosses' proposal that owner-operators take a 20 percent pay cut. Deliveries of concrete blocks were held up as a result of the demonstration.

officially at 13.8 percent, but many working people are among the ranks of the "informal sector" of chronically underemployed. The sell-off of state-owned industries during the Menem years led to mass layoffs.

Union membership, for decades one of the highest in the capitalist world, has plunged from 70 percent in 1985 to 40 percent in 1997, and is probably even less now.

## Pundits misestimate workers

Incapable of leading a fight against this assault, the union bureaucracy's structures are shattering, like other post-World War II institutions. The unions have been hog-tied by their long-standing political subordination to the Peronist party, a bourgeois nationalist party that for years posed as a champion of the dispossessed and even as a critic of U.S. imperialism, with Bonapartist figure Juan Perón as its symbol.

Under Menem, the Peronists shifted sharply away from this posture. Meanwhile, the allegiance of the working class to the Peronists has steadily loosened. The election of De la Rúa confirms this pattern.

The big-business press interprets these developments by describing working people in Argentina as more conservative. "Some 73 percent of Argentines do not trust the

unions," a reporter from the *Financial Times* of London smugly declared, citing an opinion poll. Left-wing middle-class commentators echo this view.

But resistance among workers and farmers in the South American nation continues to bubble, sometimes exploding unexpectedly. The anger is often directed at the traditional political parties and institutions that have failed to offer solutions to the deep-going social crisis.

The most recent social explosion took place in the northeastern province of Corrientes, where workers at state-owned enterprises, infuriated because they had not been paid for months, blocked a bridge—a key international trade link—and waged a pitched battle with federal police, who killed two workers. The national government has been running the province since then.

Some 100 workers at the Lumbrey y Parizzi poultry plant, near the industrial center of Rosario, began the millennium by taking over their factory and blocking a highway January 5. They prevented the bosses, who were pleading bankruptcy, from removing machinery from the plant and closing it down without paying wages. Government officials hastily intervened and worked out a deal to keep the plant running for the time being.

## Pathfinder sets new Spanish publishing plans

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Pathfinder Press is launching an effort to translate three new books into Spanish over the coming year, beginning with *The History of American Trotskyism, 1928-38: Report of a Participant* by James P. Cannon. The other two are *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, also by Cannon, and *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs.

A team of volunteers from around the United States and other countries will be carrying out the work. Volunteers are needed now.

The first to be translated, *The History of American Trotskyism*, will be serialized month by month in *Perspectiva Mundial*. The book's preface, by Jack Barnes, has appeared in the new April issue of the Spanish-language socialist magazine.

Producing these books in Spanish will help meet a need that has become more and more pressing, as workers in the United States who have immigrated from Latin America get increasingly involved in the working-class resistance to the employers, government, and cops that is developing today. These political weapons are necessary to recruit and train a growing cadre of the communist movement, both in the United States and internationally, whose first language is Spanish. They help answer the question many radicalizing workers and youth ask communists: who are you and

where do you come from?

All three are basic works that recount formative stages in the fight to build a communist party of workers in this country, an effort rooted in the October 1917 Russian Revolution led by the Bolshevik party.

This expansion of Pathfinder's Spanish-language arsenal follows the lead of communist workers in Canada and elsewhere who are organizing volunteers to translate three basics of Marxism into French over the next year: *The History of American Trotskyism*, *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, and *In Defense of Marxism* by Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky.

*The History of American Trotskyism* comprises a series of 12 public talks that Cannon gave in 1942 in New York. One of the founding leaders of the Communist Party of the United States after the Russian Revolution, and subsequently of the Socialist Workers Party, Cannon recounts the effort to build a proletarian party here.

The firsthand account begins in 1928, when he and other cadres were expelled from the Communist Party for supporting the fight led by Trotsky to continue the communist course of V.I. Lenin. Cannon takes the story up to New Year's 1938, when the communist organization in the United States took the name Socialist Workers Party.

As Cannon states in his first talk, "Trotskyism is not a new movement, a new

doctrine, but the restoration, the revival, of genuine Marxism as it was expounded and practiced in the Russian revolution and in the early days of the Communist International."

*The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* is a handbook on building a Leninist party. It documents an internal political struggle within the Socialist Workers Party, following the outbreak of World War II, to maintain a proletarian course against a petty-bourgeois minority that buckled under the imperialist war pressures and rapidly abandoned Marxism.

In *Teamster Rebellion* Dobbs tells the story of the 1934 Teamsters battles in Minneapolis waged by thousands of workers, who helped build a fighting industrial union movement in the Midwest. Dobbs, who emerged from the ranks as part of the class-struggle leadership of the strikes, was national secretary of the SWP from 1953 to 1972, and was four times the party's presidential candidate.

The book, part of a four-volume series on the Midwest Teamsters organizing drive in the 1930s, graphically illustrates the kind of proletarian party that is needed to lead a mass fight against the employers and their system, a fight that must ultimately take on the political power of the capitalist minority and replace it with a workers and farmers government.

## for further reading

### The History of American Trotskyism

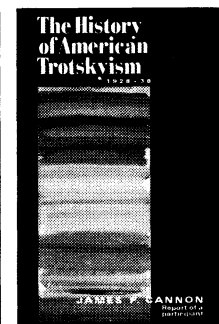
Report of a Participant, 1928-38

By James P. Cannon

"Trotskyism is not a new movement, a new doctrine," Cannon says, "but the restoration, the revival of genuine Marxism as it was expounded and practiced in the Russian revolution and in the early days of the Communist International." In this series of twelve talks given in 1942,

James P. Cannon recounts an important chapter in the efforts to build a proletarian party in the United States. \$18.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.





# Miami conference scores free speech victory

BY BILL KALMAN

MIAMI—In a victory for free speech and intellectual and cultural exchange, the International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) was held here March 16-18. LASA, founded in 1966, is the largest academic organization in the world devoted to the study of Latin American and Caribbean history, politics, and culture.

Despite the efforts of local government officials and rightist Cuban-Americans to disrupt the event because of the presence of a sizable delegation from Cuba, the conference came off as scheduled. The delegation, which numbered more than 100 scholars and academicians, was the largest number of Cubans to visit Miami in 41 years.

About 2,800 professors and scholars from the United States, and another 2,200 from other countries attended the conference, which featured 691 seminars and workshops, and had some 2,772 academic papers presented to the conference participants.

Discussion on the Cuban revolution was a centerpiece of the gathering, with 36 semi-

nars devoted to the topic, the most of any subject. LASA was founded by academics, especially in the United States, to study revolutions in Latin America. "We're a product of the Cuban revolution," explained Ivan Jaksic, Latin American history professor from the University of Notre Dame.

## Threats pushed back

The LASA congress provoked controversy in broader Miami politics when, several days before the opening session, *El Nuevo Herald*, the Spanish-language sister publication of the *Miami Herald*, published the names of 112 scholars from Cuba who had signed up to attend the gathering.

On that same day, Miami-Dade county officials informed Florida International University's (FIU) Latin American and Caribbean Center, the conference host group, that an opening night gala slated to be held at the Miami-Dade Cultural Plaza in downtown Miami would have to be moved. County officials insisted that the mere presence of the Cuban delegation violated a 1996 county ban against using any government facility or resources in dealings with

Cuba or Cuban citizens. Organizations seeking to use or rent county facilities must sign an affidavit agreeing to comply with the anti-Cuba policy.

On the eve of the conference the county was forced to back down when conference organizers demanded that the county uphold the contract they had signed with FIU. "This one slipped through without the affidavit," county attorney Robert Cuevas said. "But they signed [the contract], they paid their money [\$3,840], so they can have their event."

The liberal *Miami Herald*, reflecting the views of the prevailing wing of the local ruling class, wrote in an editorial that the county's ban "nearly embarrassed the community." It encouraged officials to, "Dump this ban, or at least amend it so that arts and educational exchanges are encouraged. Defectors always welcome."

Death threats directed against the conference's organizers at FIU forced the Latin American and Caribbean Center to close for the duration of the event.

Conference organizers paid \$30,000 for a heavy police presence. "I've never been

to an academic conference before where you had police checking badges at the door and with so much overt security," said Liza Bakewell, an anthropology professor at Brown University.

But large-scale rightist protests anticipated by some never materialized. Conference participants counted four rightists protesting outside the first day, and about a dozen on each of the next two days. Radio Marti, the U.S. government sponsored radio station that broadcasts anti-revolution propaganda into Cuba, set up shop inside the Miami Hyatt-Regency where the LASA gathering was held, and broadcast daily programs.

A number of workshops on Cuba featured well-known academicians and liberal commentators presenting their views on what a "post-Fidel" Cuba would look like and what stance the U.S. government should take.

Another discussion at the conference was on "globalization," the role of the World Trade Organization, and the labor movement, mainly reflecting views dominant in the trade union officialdom in the United States.

One workshop took up the situation of farm workers in southwestern Florida, including the fight of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers.

## Conference-goers buy Pathfinder Cuba titles

BY BILL KALMAN

More than 100 book publishers were on hand to exhibit tens of thousands of titles on Latin America in both English and Spanish at the LASA conference. Exhibitors included prestigious university presses, the Washington Office on Latin America, the World Bank, and Ediciones Cubanas, a major publishing house in Cuba.

Pathfinder Press, which includes in its titles a range of books that contain a rich history of the revolutionary struggles of workers and peasants in Latin America and the Caribbean, participated in the conference as well.

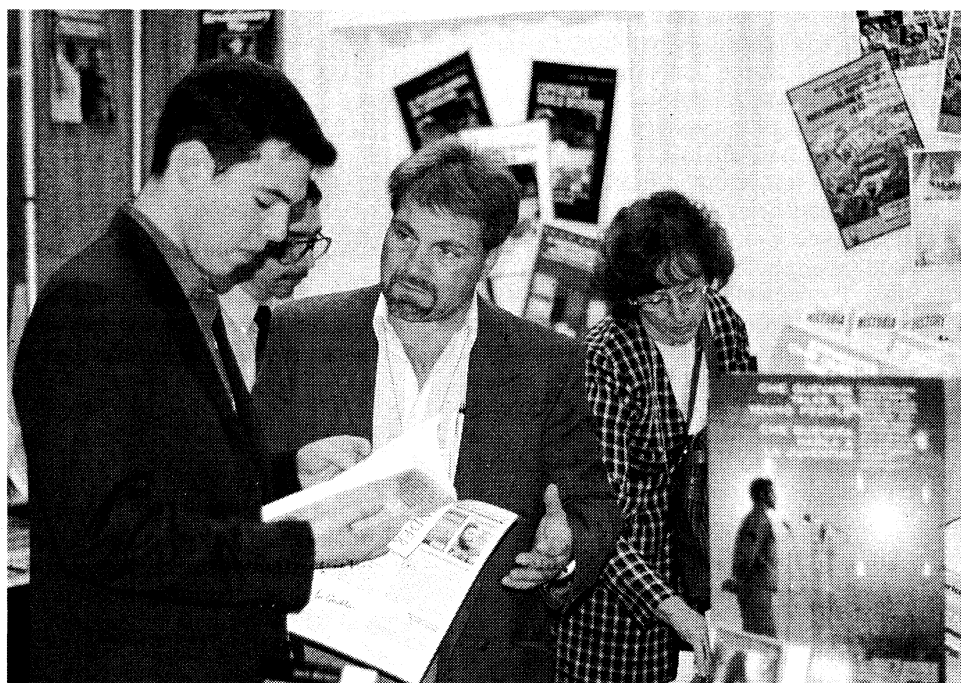
Volunteers at the Pathfinder table sold \$605 worth of books over the three-day conference, including seven copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* in English and Spanish. This title by Jack Barnes was among the most looked at on the table. In addition, 10 copies of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* in both languages, and seven copies of *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces* in English and Spanish were sold. Some 200 copies of the Pathfinder Press 2000 catalog were distributed.

## Plans for classroom adoptions

Additionally, conference-goers purchased 18 copies of *La Gaceta de Cuba*, a Cuban literary and cultural magazine. Pathfinder volunteers reported meeting two professors who planned to adopt Pathfinder titles for classroom use. A Miami-based bookseller that specializes in books and music from Cuba, will be working to list Pathfinder's Cuba titles on its upcoming Web site.

The Pathfinder booth at LASA was a center for discussion for political activists who were participating in the conference. Antonia Garcia, active in the fight against racism in Brazil, spent an hour looking through the books and discussing politics with volunteers staffing the booth. "Neoliberalism is just another way to say imperialism," Garcia explained, "and we need to overthrow it."

Garcia, a supporter of the Movement of Landless Rural Workers, said she was particularly attracted to titles on Cuba and the



Pathfinder volunteers sold wide range of titles at Latin American Studies conference

book *Capitalism's World Disorder*. "Together, urban poor and the rural workers can fight for better health care, education, day care, transportation, and democratic rights," she said.

A number of students from Florida, around the country, and throughout Latin America visited the table. One student from Bard College in New York purchased more than \$70 of books on Cuba.

## Court strikes down Florida school voucher program

BY ANGEL LARISCY

MIAMI—Florida Judge Ralph Smith ruled that the state's school voucher, the only statewide initiative of its kind in the country, is unconstitutional because it diverts public tax money to private schools.

The March 13 ruling was seen as a blow to Florida governor John Ellis Bush one week after the massive rally of thousands in Tallahassee against his attacks on affirmative action in the state.

The voucher program sought to undercut public education by cynically posing as a way for children at the poorest schools to gain a better education. At the same time, teachers are fighting low pay and worsen-

ing conditions in the Florida public school system.

The "A+ Plan," as the education initiative is called, was a cornerstone of Bush's 1998 campaign for governor. He said the state will appeal the ruling and that plans are in the works to expand the program throughout the state while the case is in the courts. Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush also hailed the voucher program as a prototype that he would like to copy on a national scale. Similar tax-dollars-to-private-school programs in Maine, Vermont, Ohio, and Pennsylvania have been struck down by state and federal courts.

The plan requires all students to take the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test once a year and for schools to be graded from A to F, based on student scores. Students at schools that receive an F two years in a row can use vouchers to attend the educational facility of their choice—whether it be another public school or a private school. Florida's Catholic schools had ready about 800 slots for children with vouchers in Miami-Dade and Broward counties.

Teachers' unions, the Parent Teachers Association (PTA), and the NAACP have expressed support for the court's decision. The day after the ruling, hundreds of teachers gathered at the state capitol in Tallahassee to denounce the A+ plan. Teachers and union leaders, as well as some state Democratic Party members, presented a list of demands, including an average pay raise of 10 percent for teachers, boosting the minimum salary to \$40,000, and hiring an addi-

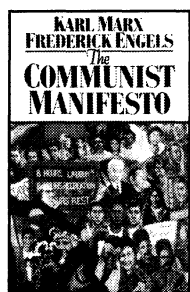
tional 10,000 teachers over the next four years.

In a March 16 editorial, the *Miami Herald* urged the state to appeal the decision, and asserted, "Gov. Jeb Bush's A+ Plan is a bold initiative for improving public schools...for empowering parents to have a say in getting the best possible education for their children."

The United Teachers of Dade and the Dade County Council PTA/PTSA have leased 6,000 seats at the Miami Arena for a "Rally for Public Education" on March 31, which is a teacher planning day when students are not required to attend school. Teachers have been told they could receive an early release to attend. The leaflet for the event demands: stop the vouchers, reduce overcrowded classes, improve the facilities, and for professional respect.

On March 28, the Miami-Dade Public Schools Superintendent Roger Cuevas declared that teachers could not leave to attend a "political rally." He told the *Miami Herald*, "A rally is political in nature. I'm not going to sanction during any work-duty hours a political activity."

Union officials are encouraging teachers to attend by using a half-day of personal time, taking a late lunch, or by asking permission from their principal.



## The Communist Manifesto

Karl Marx, Frederick Engels

Founding document of the modern working-class movement, published in 1848. Explains why communists act on the basis not of preconceived principles but of facts springing from the actual class struggle, and why communism, to the degree it is a theory, is the generalization of the historical line of march of the working class and of the political conditions for its liberation. Also available in Spanish. \$3.95

## Pathfinder

Available from bookstores listed on page 12, or from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Please include \$3 for shipping.

## Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism

V.I. Lenin

"I trust that this pamphlet will help the reader to understand the fundamental economic question, that of the economic essence of imperialism," Lenin wrote in 1917. "For unless this is studied, it will be impossible to understand and appraise modern war and modern politics." \$3.95

THE MILITANT

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# Socialists register progress in struggle for a

## As resistance grows, so does the need of workers, small farmers, and

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

CHICAGO—"This is a double celebration," said Jack Barnes, opening a Sunday afternoon meeting of 130 here.

"We mark the progress the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists have made, as we organize, structure, and transform the institutions of growing numbers of branches of the communist movement through participating more effectively in the resistance of working people. Out of these experiences, both the SWP and YS are becoming more proletarian, more disciplined, and better fighting organizations.

"Today," Barnes continued, "we also celebrate a very important aspect of this process of proletarianization—the expanding work of Pathfinder Press, registered in the political interest Pathfinder books met with at the Havana International Book Fair. It is one example of how the books meet a need felt by fighting workers, farmers, and youth here and around the world. They know they have to change the world."

The March 26 meeting here was one of three held last month, each of them billed as a "Reportback from Havana Book Fair: Building the Communist Movement." Two hundred people attended the March 5 event in New York, and more than 100 took part in San Francisco on March 12.

The meetings featured major presentations by SWP leaders Mary-Alice Waters and Jack Barnes. Waters, who is president of Pathfinder Press, reported for the *Militant* and worked with a team of Pathfinder supporters who represented the publishing house at the Havana Book Fair. Barnes, the party's national secretary, is the author of *Capitalism's World Disorder* and the *Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, two books whose content was central to the meetings.

Young Socialists leader Samantha Kern and Linda Jenness, a party supporter who is a volunteer in the Pathfinder Reprint Project, also spoke. Both had been part of the international team of socialist workers and youth who brought with them to Havana their experiences as participants in the resistance of working people in a number of countries. Other members of this international team were on the platform at one or another of the meetings, along with Pathfinder's Spanish-, French-, and Farsi-language editors, and organizers of the party's Capital Fund effort.

### Working-class resistance

The political streams that converged at the meetings flowed out of the working-class resistance and broader protest actions taking place on the front lines of the class struggle in every region of the United States.

This stepped-up pace of resistance was apparent over the three weeks in March that spanned the meetings. In actions from Tallahassee, Florida, to Mansfield, Ohio, to Tillery, North Carolina, and Bronx, New York, tens of thousands of toilers responded to the bankers' and bosses' drive to try to grind more profits out of the labor of working people in town and country, and to weaken hard-won political gains.

Workers and youth in Chicago, for example, drove in fresh from a 4,000-strong demonstration in Mansfield of steelworkers and their supporters to back the fight of locked-out workers at AK Steel. Others had just returned from the March 21 Rally for Rural America in Washington, D.C., or local actions by farmers facing ruin as falling commodity prices leave them increasingly vulnerable to the squeeze by the banks and competition from giant corporations. The road warriors set up an impromptu photo display of those actions at the entrance of the meeting.

Socialists from Miami and elsewhere in the Southeast who came to the New York meeting were deeply involved in building protests defending affirmative action in Florida and headed straight from that gathering to the March 7 mobilization in Tallahassee, the state capital, to march with other youth or in union contingents.

Several participants in the New York event had just returned from Cuba as part of a farmers delegation, and many others in attendance had organized meetings and fund-raising activities to make the trip possible. Participants from New York City itself were involved in the labor struggles spreading throughout the city, as well as in the increasingly explosive protests against police brutality that have marked the class struggle in the five boroughs.

Leading up to the San Francisco gathering, socialists on the West Coast had walked the picket lines with US Airways workers.

Members of the new SWP branch organizing committee and Young Socialists unit in Fresno had joined with dairy farmers discussing how to combat the collapse in prices they receive from big processors and distributors. Socialists had joined young people campaigning against attacks on democratic rights advanced in the guise of the "Youth

smaller cities—distant from major metropolitan areas—that are centers of basic industries, and that are and will be the scene of struggles by working people against the bosses' profit-driven intensification of labor, lengthening of the workday, and assault against other conditions on and off the job. These regions are also an arena of political



Militant/Salm Kolis

Some 4,000 union fighters and supporters rallied on March 25 in Mansfield, Ohio, to oppose the lockout imposed by the AK Steel company seven months ago. Workers and farmers are stepping up the pace of resistance to capitalist attacks today.

Crime Initiative" in the state.

Barnes noted that for the first time in many years, the Pathfinder supporters and party and YS members who participated in the book fair in Cuba this year did so at the same time that socialists were working in coal mines and building a fraction in the United Mine Workers of America in coal regions around the United States.

First-hand knowledge of the harsh conditions on the job and the resistance of coal miners—knowledge made possible by the work of branches of the party and YS chapters functioning in mining areas—had an impact on the three meetings, as well as on the work of the team at the book fair.

The attendance by so many workers and young fighters set the tone of the celebrations, which was both serious and hospitable. The participation of a sizable number of veteran working-class political activists who are Black was an additional expression of the growing resistance and polarization that mark the class struggle in the United States today, and of the increased political attraction to a communist party.

Organizers of the three meetings prepared displays featuring current union struggles, farmers actions, and other protests. Photos showed socialists selling and promoting Pathfinder titles and the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* across the country at picket lines and demonstrations, at plant gates and campuses, and in working-class communities.

### Structuring a workers party

Members of virtually every branch of the SWP and every chapter of the Young Socialists participated in the three meetings, as well as a number of socialist workers and youth from Canada.

Many of those present—both of younger and older generations—took the opportunity to "catch up" with each other. Over the previous eight months—and in an accelerated way over the last five—the SWP had established seven new branches and branch organizing committees. Many longtime socialist workers, along with YS members, have picked up and moved in recent months. Barnes noted that the number was nearing 50 since the fall of 1999.

These moves are expanding the geographic reach of the communist movement and integrating the party more fully along the initial lines of resistance by vanguard militants among workers and farmers. There are now party units in more localities and

struggles—often called "culture wars" today—as the capitalist social crisis accelerates class polarization.

The meeting in New York celebrated the first steps to establish three new branches in the city and a fourth in Newark, in order to advance building fractions of socialists in the garment and meatpacking industries especially, and to win recruits to the communist movement among workers there.

SWP and YS members had also moved out of New York City to help set up a branch organizing committee in Charlotte, North Carolina, a center of the textile industry in the South, and to reinforce the work of branches in Miami, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Allentown, Pennsylvania. In California, the party and YS are stronger following the move by several members to Fresno to continue their work and to organize a branch and YS chapter in that big agricultural and industrial center. Several other socialists were on their way from the Bay Area to Detroit and Pittsburgh.

As part of these recent advances, Young Socialists have taken new steps to build a communist youth organization along a proletarian course, joining in struggles of workers and farmers and political protest actions and debates among students and other young people. The participation of a strong component of youth interested in the socialist movement—who listened intently to the presentations, joined informal discussion, purchased large quantities of books on special sale, and often left to march the next day or two at a working-class protest somewhere—marked the three gatherings.

New members joined the Young Socialists as a result of the work at the each of the meetings. "This week the Young Socialists took in five new members, and four more have asked to join," YS leader Samantha Kern announced at the Chicago meeting.

Workers who had met party members on the job also participated in the gatherings in New York, San Francisco, and Chicago.

Each event included a very substantial buffet and refreshments prepared by party supporters, creating a relaxed atmosphere that encouraged informal discussion before and after the meeting. At each celebration, local Young Socialists chapters aggressively, but good-naturedly, organized fund-raising raffles, as well.

At the end of March, four socialist workers were on their way to the print shop in New York that produces Pathfinder books and pamphlets, as well as the *Militant*.



Militant/Aaron Armstrong/Inset: Linda Joynt



Jack Barnes, SWP national secretary, speaks March 5 in New York. Behind him are, left to right: Luis Madrid, editor of *El desorden mundial del capitalismo; política obrera al milenio*; Ma'mud Shirvani, Pathfinder's Farsi-language editor; book fair team member and *Perspectiva Mundial* editor Martin Koppel. James Harris, SWP leader who was part of delegation of farmers to Cuba, and Pathfinder print shop director Dave Prince were also seated on the platform. To Barnes's left are Doug Nelson, from the party branch and YS chapter in New York; Brian Taylor, who gave fund pitch; and YS leader Samantha Kern. Inset: Mary-Alice Waters, SWP leader and president of Pathfinder Press.



# proletarian party

## youth for Pathfinder books

*Perspectiva Mundial*, and *New International*. The New York meeting itself was used with the energy and step-by-step accomplishments of the print shop workers in increasing their political organization, productivity, and ability to keep the legacy of the working-class movement contained in Pathfinder titles in print.

Members and supporters of the party alike are engaged in an international effort to keep these publications available to a growing number of workers who use them as tools to advance the fight. In the process, the entire communist movement is internalizing an understanding of the important political leverage revolutionary-minded workers gain from having a production apparatus that can turn out the books, pamphlets, newspapers, and magazines working people the world over are looking for and need—that they have to have—as they come into sharpening conflict with the exploiting classes.

The concentration of party supporters at each meeting reflected their growing numbers nationwide and their more effective organized involvement in the work to make possible the production of Pathfinder books. The pace of new supporters volunteering for the Pathfinder Reprint Project picked up markedly between the New York and Chicago meetings.

### Secondhand books a big hit

Alongside the tables offering a wide range of full-priced Pathfinder books, a special sale of secondhand and shopworn titles was held at all three meetings. Many young people took ample advantage of this opportunity. A number of workers who traveled to participate in the meetings also stocked up on these titles.

At the New York meeting, a big part of the stock came from a library accumulated by the former New York branch. That sale was such a success that the Young Socialists organized similar efforts at the San Francisco and Chicago events, loading tables with books donated by supporters of the socialist movement, as well as SWP branches, which culled duplicates from their libraries.

Especially large and valuable contributions came from the personal libraries of Paul Montauk and Helene Millington, two longtime cadres of the SWP who died in recent years. Another sizable donation came from Jeanne Lawrence, a party supporter in Chicago.

These special sales were such a success that by the end of the last of the three meetings, it was clear they will become an organized feature of major events of the communist movement from now on—with party supporters across the country culling their libraries for old printings, duplicates, and other political titles to contribute to the effort.

For between 50 cents and \$2 a book, young people were able to give their personal libraries of working-class titles a priceless jump start. Works by the founders of the modern communist movement, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, and by Russian revolutionary leaders V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky were snapped up. Titles by James P. Cannon and Farrell Dobbs, leaders of the Socialist Workers Party for many decades, were also very popular.

Improving on the sales in New York and San Francisco, where many young people struggled with armloads of books as they walked away from the tables, the Young Socialists in Chicago provided shopping bags and cartons for customers, which participants took advantage of to increase their purchases.

Adam Larsen, a high school student from Des Moines, Iowa, filled up a large cardboard box with the secondhand books he paid \$40 for in Chicago. "Worth about \$300" without the price cuts, he said.

Fidel Maldonado, who came with a co-worker from a meatpacking plant in Minnesota, proudly displayed the Spanish-language books he had purchased. They ranged from *La evolución de la mujer* (Woman's Evolution) by Evelyn Reed, to *Socialismo y el hombre en Cuba* by Che Guevara, to *La Guerra Social en Chicago* by the nineteenth-century leader of the fight for Cu-

ban national independence, José Martí.

Maldonado had been a farmer in his native Mexico before coming to the United States. While working as an agricultural laborer near Homestead, Florida, a number of years ago, he bought a copy of the Spanish-language socialist monthly *Perspectiva Mundial* from a member of a socialist sales team. He met the party again when he moved to the Midwest, and starting reading some Pathfinder titles. Before then, he said, he had never come across political books "worth the trouble to read."

### Pathfinder at Havana Book Fair

"I salute everyone here who was behind the success of the Pathfinder team at the Havana Book Fair," said Barnes, at the Chicago meeting after he was introduced by Luis Rivera, a leader of the Young Socialists in the city. Barnes chaired the meetings in all three cities.

A record 200,000 people converged on the historic San Carlos de la Cabaña fortress on the Havana harbor for this now annual book fair. Working people who participated responded to Pathfinder's titles with keen interest. Pathfinder's catalog of more than 350 titles contains writings and speeches that generalize the lessons of struggles of the modern working-class movement over the last century and a half.

Barnes listed the team that represented Pathfinder at the fair, with team members coming from Australia, Canada, France, Iceland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Barnes noted the involvement of Young Socialists members from four countries, whose participation strengthened the entire effort.

Samantha Kern, the organizer of the National Executive Committee of the Young Socialists, was the first speaker at each of the three meetings. "Today the YS is celebrating the political changes in working-class politics, and advances by the communist movement, that have made it possible for us to move our national office from San Francisco to New York City," Kern told the Chicago gathering.

This step both registers and is part of a recent political strengthening of the party in the New York area, Kern said. The four new branches in New York and northern New Jersey are converging in action, as well as in size and structure, with other party units across the country, putting themselves on a political footing to respond to the rise in working-class struggles there. As a result, having its national office in New York increases the ability of the Young Socialists leadership to draw on the experiences of YS members in that city as part of the organization's National Executive Committee.

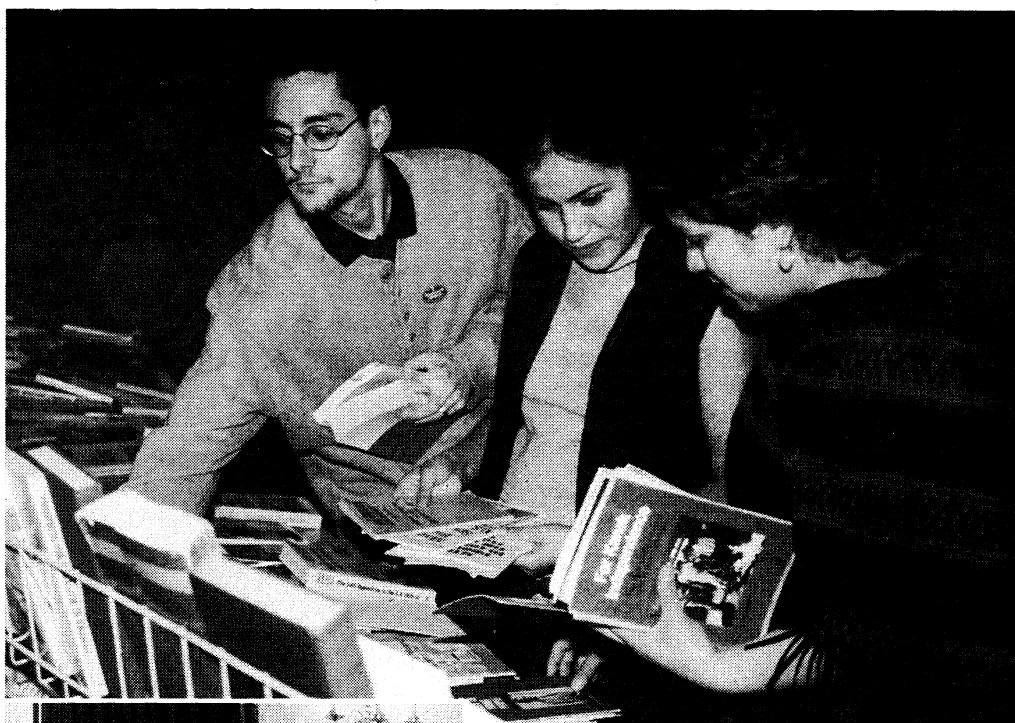
Kern and NEC member Jason Alessio moved from San Francisco to New York to help establish the new YS office. The third member of the former NEC has moved to Fresno to help build the new party branch and YS chapter there.

The new National Executive Committee in New York includes a worker in the garment industry, a college freshman, two workers in the Pathfinder print shop, and Kern, who currently functions full-time as a leader of the YS.

Kern remarked on the nonstop political discussions she was a part of during the Havana book fair. "It was inspiring to see the interest in these books among new generations of revolutionaries in Cuba," she said.

The liberating impact of reading the communist legacy is often a lasting one. A Cuban student leader told Kern he had met members of the Young Socialists in France during a wave of student and labor mobilizations there in 1996. Like him, the YS members were invited guests at a congress of the Movement of Young Communists in France. A Young Socialist who is today a coal miner introduced him to the monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*, Kern said, and "he has been an avid reader of the magazine and Pathfinder ever since."

After the fair, team members visited schools and factories both in and outside Havana, finding the same intense interest in the books and the activities of communists in the United States and other imperi-



Militant/ Carole Lesnick (above), John Sarge  
Tables of used or shop-worn books on sale at bargain prices, like the one pictured above in San Francisco, proved a big draw at all three meetings. A wide range of political books—Marxist classics and staples of Pathfinder's catalog, many donated by supporters of the communist movement—were available for prices ranging from 50 cents to \$2. Many young people walked away with armfuls, bags, and boxes of books. Left: at the Chicago meeting.

effort. With encouragement by socialist workers, almost 60 more have volunteered since then. "We will be over 200 soon!" said Barnes.

As one example, just two months earlier only three party supporters in Chicago had been Pathfinder reprint project volunteers. At a meeting in late January, the party's National Committee launched a campaign to expand the numbers of party supporters and to encourage more of them to sign up as reprint project volunteers. Today in Chicago there are some 15 volunteers for the project.

Working closely with the leadership of the party, a handful of SWP supporters initiated the project a little over two years ago. It involves a major effort to keep Pathfinder's entire list of books and pamphlets in print and available to militants, using digital technology that allows each book to be produced at substantially lower costs.

The volunteers take each Pathfinder book and pamphlet and convert it into digital files. Each title requires hundreds of hours of labor—from scanning, to proofreading, to formatting, to indexing, to graphic design. Once that work is done, the files can be rapidly and more economically turned into books by the Pathfinder print shop, using a computer-to-plate printing process.

The supporters of the communist movement "are simply transforming our ability to produce the political weapons" that these books represent, said Barnes. From the

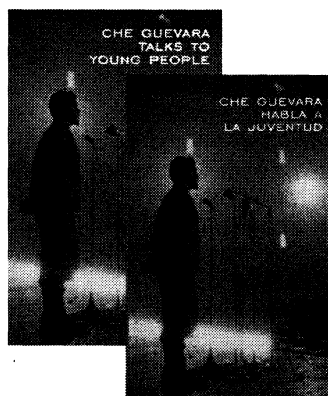
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### From Pathfinder

## Che Guevara Talks to Young People

"We are attacked a great deal because of what we are. But we are attacked much, much more because we show to every nation of the Americas what it's possible to be." —Che Guevara, July 28, 1960

**Special offer \$11 for Pathfinder Readers Club members (regular price \$14.95)**

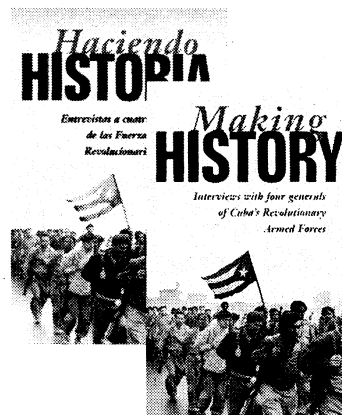


## Making History

Interviews with four generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces

The human beings who fought to transform Cuban society, and to extend solidarity to others fighting imperialism, were ordinary working people. Who they were, and the experiences that transformed them are the subject of these interviews.

**Special offer \$11.95 for Pathfinder Readers Club members (regular price \$15.95)**



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12

# Socialists register progress in party building

Continued from Page 9

moment the reprint project began, the question was posed: "Can the print shop keep up with them?" A sizable backlog of titles waiting to be printed has built up in recent months.

Now the print shop leadership has prepared a schedule of dedicated press and bindery time to produce three books a week for the next five months. The assigned schedule was displayed on a table in the meeting hall—a very popular table.

The shop workers hit their marks in March. At the Chicago meeting, Barnes picked up, one by one, the eight books that had been printed since the meeting in New York just three weeks earlier—*Capitalism's World Disorder* in French; two titles by James P. Cannon, *The History of American Trotskyism* and *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*; a new edition of *Che Guevara Speaks*, with much-improved and more complete translations, and *Teamster Politics* by Farrell Dobbs (both featuring striking new covers); *The Politics of Chicano Liberation*; *Black Music, White Business* by Frank Kofsky; and *Malcolm X Talks to Young People*. In addition, the shop also reprinted several *Education for Socialists* bulletins.

In the same period, the print shop workers put through a near record \$350,000 in non-Pathfinder printing work that is crucial to maintaining the shop and its ability to produce books workers and farmers need.

At the Chicago meeting, several volunteers staffed an informational table on the reprint project, where they signed up new participants and demonstrated the computer database through which the work is organized.

"Participating in the Havana Book Fair as part of an international team was truly an inspiration," said Linda Jenness, who traveled to Cuba as a reporter for newspapers in Chicago.

Pathfinder has been present at every bi-annual fair in Havana since the second one in 1986, she said. "Many who have seen our stand at previous fairs came looking for our table and looking for us. Having visited once, people came back for more discussions. People sat in our stall and read what they couldn't afford to buy."

One young woman seized on *Problems of Women's Liberation*, and *Woman's Evo-*

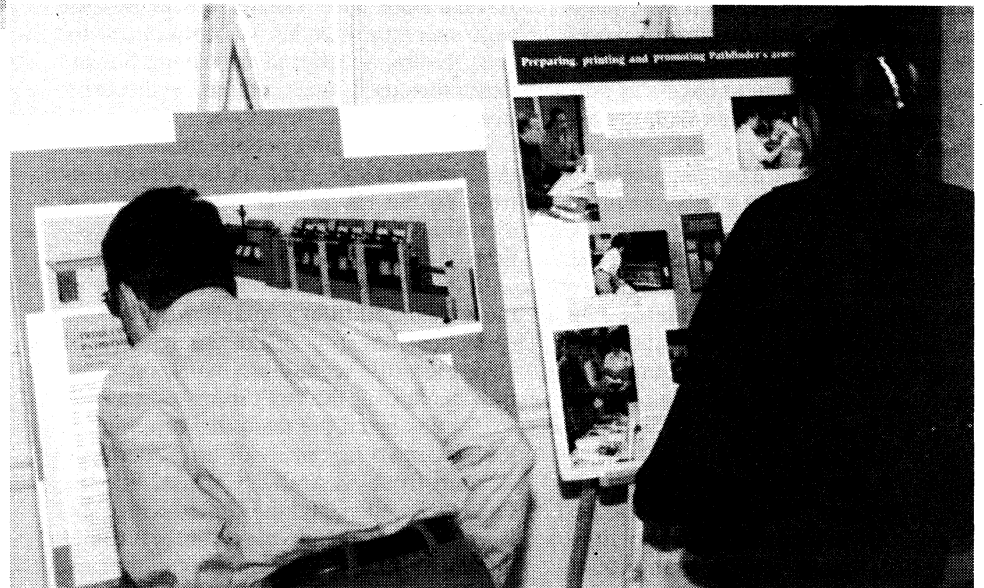


Above: Ruth Cheney, a member of the steering committee of the Pathfinder Reprint Project, staffed a table in Chicago. In front of her is a roll call of the volunteers around the world—a list approaching 200 people by the last of the three meetings. Right: at the same event, participants studied photos and descriptions of the new stitcher to be purchased by Pathfinder's print shop, and of the various stages in the creation of a Pathfinder reprint.

lution, two titles by Evelyn Reed. She was studying the question of the origin of women's oppression. Some of her classmates had told her that she must be a "frustrated woman" to pick that topic for her thesis.

"I am a frustrated woman," she told Jenness. "I'm frustrated because until I came across your booth I couldn't find materialist books on this subject!" She was overjoyed to find Pathfinder's rich arsenal of titles that began meeting her needs.

"We were not outsiders," said Jenness of the volunteers who staffed the Pathfinder booth. Amid the swirling political discussions around the Pathfinder stall, she said, "I felt at home. But I was also struck by a sobering thought. What if 70 percent of Pathfinder titles were not there? Think of the scope, the



breadth of what we would have been missing!

"The Pathfinder Reprint Project is crucial. But the only way to increase its momentum is to get more volunteers." During her visit to Cuba Jenness worked with two volunteer proofreaders in Havana who are part of the project.

Jenness said the respect Pathfinder's titles have gained in Cuba, and the close working relationship it has built up with publish-

ers and other comrades there, is founded on the publishing house's record of "complete integrity and honesty."

She also urged *Militant* readers to continue to contribute generously to the Books for Cuba fund that helps finance Pathfinder book donations to libraries and other institutions there.

## Che Guevara and criterion of quality

"To produce with quality signifies respect for the people," said Mary-Alice Waters in her feature presentation, citing one of the banners of the Ministry of Industry in the early years of the Cuban revolutionary government, when that ministry was headed by Ernesto Che Guevara. "And Che was famous for another thing he insisted on, that 'beauty is not something at odds with the revolution,'" she added.

A commander of the Rebel Army in the fight against the Batista dictatorship, Guevara took on important governmental posts after the triumph in 1959, and helped to define the socialist and internationalist course of the revolution in his speeches, writings, and actions.

"Quality and beauty are class questions," said Waters. They were important to Che because a socialist revolution fundamentally is concerned with the "quality of life for—and generated by—working people." Che debated those who thought that production tallies were everything, and that concern for the quality of consumer products was a capitalist vice. Such an ultraleft condition was known in Cuba as the "measles," said Waters, because people with measles "break out red all over." Che's attitude contrasted with the approach of petty bourgeois bureaucrats, "who couldn't have cared less about the day-to-day problems faced by working people," she said.

This class criterion guides the editors, designers, print shop workers, and other volunteers who produce the books in Pathfinder's catalog, she noted. The standards of accuracy and attractive presentation that characterize many of these publications require "proletarian habits of discipline" that have to be learned.

"We all know that it is the content of these books that is indispensable to revolutionary-minded fighters. Without these lessons of the modern working-class movement our struggles will be much more difficult and costly. But today we are also paying tribute to all those who made possible the quality and beauty for which these books are more and more known and appreciated by vanguard fighters throughout the world," said Waters.

Much of the material that eventually finds its way into Pathfinder publications first appears in the pages of the socialist periodicals the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, which are "published in the interests of working people," as they declare on their mastheads. That description fits Pathfinder too.

In addition to *El desorden mundial del capitalismo*, the Spanish-language translation of *Capitalism's World Disorder* and the featured title at the Pathfinder booth, public meetings at the book fair launched two of the newest titles in Pathfinder's catalog. One introduced *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces* and its Spanish-language counterpart *Haciendo historia*, published by Editora Política, the publishing house of the Central Committee of the Cuban Commu-

## Pathfinder's non-English catalog expands

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Celebrating, using, and distributing the increasing scope of Pathfinder titles available in French, Spanish, Farsi, and Swedish was an aspect of the New York, San Francisco, and Chicago meetings held in March.

The day before the Chicago meeting, participants in a Militant Labor Forum in Paris celebrated the publication of *Le désordre mondial du capitalisme*, the French-lan-

guage translation of *Capitalism's World Disorder*. Michel Prairie, Ali Benali, and Tony Hunt of the Communist Leagues in Canada, France, and the United Kingdom respectively, spoke on a panel about the book and their efforts to get it and other Marxist books and pamphlets into the hands of workers and farmers resisting assaults by the capitalist rulers in those countries.

SWP national secretary Jack Barnes read greetings to the Chicago gathering from the Paris meeting held the previous evening. He saluted the active involvement in the Pathfinder Reprint Project of supporters of the communist movement whose first language is French, or who are experienced French-language translators. In addition to their participation in the international volunteer effort to keep Pathfinder's entire catalog of more than 350 titles in print, some of these supporters have also allotted time to help translate a number of these titles into French.

This translation work is organized through the enormous efforts of the Communist League in Canada and is directed by Prairie out of Montreal.

Both the Paris meeting, and the three held in the United States, celebrated plans to prioritize over the next few years the editing and translation into French, and the publication, of *The History of American Trotskyism* and *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* by James P. Cannon, *In Defense of Marxism* by Leon Trotsky, and *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs. *Socialism on Trial* by Cannon is also projected.

To aid the organization and centralization of the translation work, a French-language Internet database had just been completed that week, Barnes reported to the Chicago meeting.

Volunteers set up a computer there with an Internet link to display the new tool, which attracted a lot of interest from participants. The Pathfinder Reprint Project database, through which the work of the

project's volunteers is organized, served as the model for the new site.

Similar work in translating key Pathfinder titles into Spanish was announced by Barnes as well, to a rousing reception at all three meetings. The Spanish-language magazine *Perspectiva Mundial* has begun serializing *The History of American Trotskyism*, and will print a chapter each month in preparation for its publication as a Pathfinder book. *PM* editor Martin Koppel is centralizing this translation and publication effort. *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* and *Teamster Rebellion* will follow.

Translators into Spanish, like those involved in the French-language project, are drawn from qualified volunteers in the reprint project, as well as party members.

Meanwhile, Pathfinder supporters in Sweden are beginning work on translations of *Capitalism's World Disorder* and *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*. Selections in Swedish from both will be published in an interim format and posted on the Internet while the translation work is under way.

"Who would have predicted the number of Pathfinder titles that are now on sale in Farsi in Iran?" asked Barnes at the New York meeting. Ma'mud Shirvani, Pathfinder's Farsi-language editor, was on the platform of that meeting. A blowup of the striking, colorful cover of the new Iranian edition of "The Sea Change in Working-Class Politics," the opening chapter of *Capitalism's World Disorder*, hung behind the podium. By the time of the Chicago meeting, Barnes was able to hold up a copy of the completed book to show the audience.

This new title and translations of several other Pathfinder publications will be on sale in the Farsi section of the Tehran International Book Fair in early May.

On to Tehran!

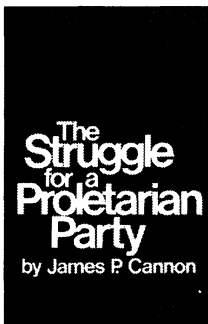
Nat London from Paris contributed to this article.

For further reading

### The Struggle for a Proletarian Party

James P. Cannon

In this companion to Trotsky's *In Defense of Marxism*, Cannon and other leaders of the Socialist Workers Party defend the centrality of proletarianization within the political and organizational principles of Marxism in a polemic against a petty-bourgeois current in the party. The debate unfolded as Washington prepared to drag U.S. working people into the slaughter of World War II. \$19.95



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014. Fax: (212) 727-0150. If ordering by mail, please include \$3 for shipping and handling.



nist Party. Another launched the English- and Spanish-language versions of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*. Leaders of Casa Editora Abril, the publishing house of the Union of Young Communists in Cuba, worked with Pathfinder to prepare the nine speeches collected in the book.

At the launch of *Making History* and *Haciendo historia*, said Waters, Irida Aguirrechu of Editora Política held up copies of both books side by side, showing with pride how favorably the Spanish edition printed in Cuba compared with the English-language version printed in the United States.

The publication and launching of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* represented a similar level of international collaboration, Waters noted. Pathfinder and Editora Abril made a breakthrough with this collection of Guevara's speeches, working together by exchanging files electronically and producing under very tight deadlines.

Blowups of the covers of these books were displayed at the celebrations in New York, San Francisco, and Chicago, along with the new French translation of *Capitalism's World Disorder* [see accompanying article]; the new Swedish-language translation of the issue of *New Internationalist* headlined "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War"; the new Farsi translation of "A Sea Change in Working-Class Politics" by Jack Barnes; and the covers of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* and both its French- and Spanish-language translations.

Waters noted that Pathfinder's contributions of books to libraries and other institutions in Cuba has had a cumulative impact over the years. She commented on the large number of librarians who visited the stand to express their appreciation and to expand their collections. Among them was the librarian from the information center of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces, which contains a growing number of Pathfinder titles, supplemented during each book fair.

Hearing of the library's plans to mount a special display of the publishing house's donation, the Pathfinder team left for them one of the photo panels used at the book fair, depicting how socialist workers and YS members use the books at protest actions, plant gates, strikes, and other locations in the United States and around the world.

#### Imperialism lost the Cold War

"What comes together in Havana at the book fair," said Waters, "is the place of the Pathfinder arsenal in the international class struggle." The Pathfinder team is always composed of socialist workers and Young Socialists members who are participants in the class struggle in their countries. The fact that they are deeply involved in union and social struggles, and in building a proletarian party and youth organization as part of the working class, makes a striking impact in discussions with working people and young leaders in Cuba.

"We bring the books themselves—the record of defeats and victories, and the generalizations of lessons of struggles available nowhere else," Waters explained. "Our class has earned those lessons through decades of battles, and we inherit the obligation to pass them on—fully, accurately, and with love."

But we also bring our own experiences "as proletarian fighters. And we find a mutual thirst for political clarity."

As much as books like *Making History* and *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* are appreciated in Cuba, Waters noted, the most sought-after titles are those in which the Socialist Workers Party and its cothinkers present a communist perspective on the central questions in the world class struggle. Among the books that drew the greatest enthusiasm and interest, she said, were *El desorden mundial del capitalismo*, as well as the Spanish translation of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* (*El rostro cambiante de la política en Estados Unidos*).

There was also lots of interest in and discussion of the most recent issue of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*, headlined "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War," which is also available in the Spanish *Nueva Internacional*. Even among revolutionaries in Cuba who respect Pathfinder and the communists who help promote it, *New Internationalist's* analysis of the decline and fall of the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union seemed far from convincing 10 years ago. This has

been changing, said Waters.

While some bought that issue of *Nueva Internacional* to try to figure out how anybody could defend such a world view, others went out of their way to express their agreement. "It is a problem for the imperialists that they lost the prop on which they relied in the Soviet Union," noted a participant in the launching of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*. And some of the most astute capitalist political leaders, like Richard Nixon, Margaret Thatcher, and Henry Kissinger held a similar view, he said.

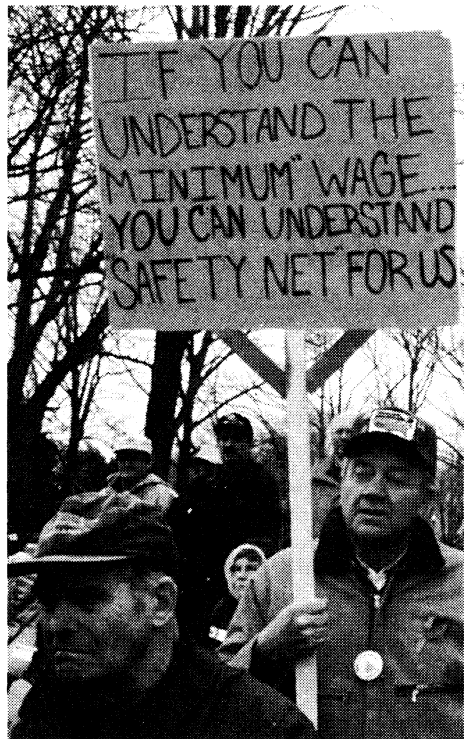
"One young person, after reading the first 100 pages of *Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, came back the next day and asked: 'How can Jack Barnes describe everything in such clear class terms?'" said Waters. "The answer—that these books are not the work of an individual alone, but draw on the cumulative experience of a working-class party over decades—made a lot of sense to him."

Waters reported that many who visited the Pathfinder booth at the fair were interested in books by Leon Trotsky, such as *The Revolution Betrayed*, and were overjoyed to find titles like Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* in the Russian original. The fact that the writings of the Russian revolutionary leader are slandered as counterrevolutionary by the Stalinist movement internationally, often influenced people's attitudes in Cuba about reading his works. But this has changed substantially over the last decade, as has the interest shown in Rosa Luxemburg, Antonio Gramsci, and other Marxists.

#### Keen interest in U.S. class struggle

Many Cubans were "very interested to hear us explain what is happening in the United States—to hear about the 50,000-strong mobilization to demand that the battle flag of the slavery flying atop the capitol in Columbia, South Carolina, be removed—the biggest demonstration ever in the South—and to hear about the battle on the Charleston docks one week later, as longshoremen defended themselves against scab labor and a police riot."

The socialists from the United States de-

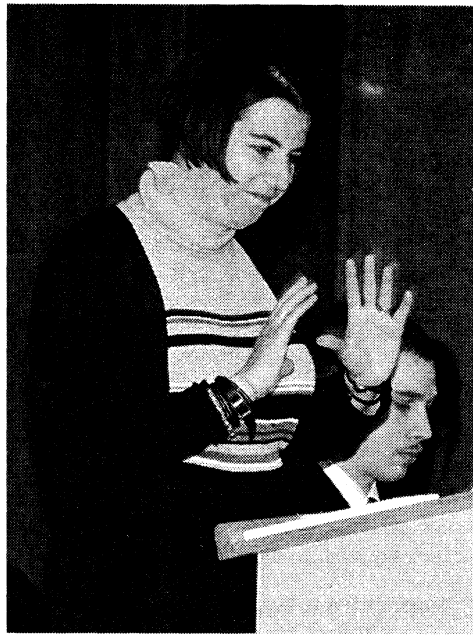


Militant/Doug Jenness

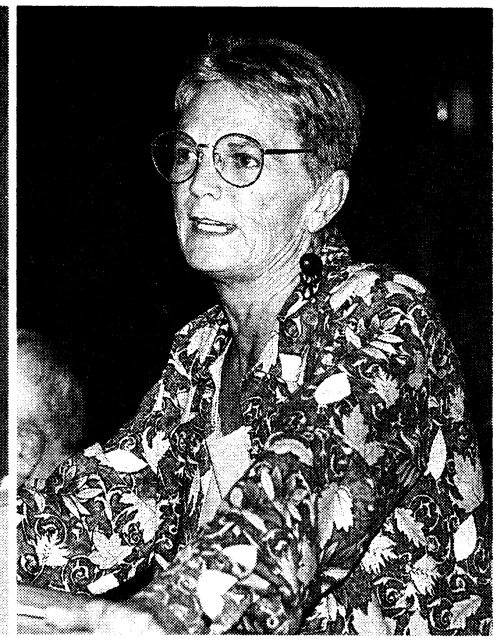
#### Rally for Rural America in Washington on March 20.

scribed actions by working farmers to stave off banks and government agencies forcing the producers into bankruptcy and loss of their land. After Cuban television and newspapers reported the visit to Cuba by a group of farmers from Georgia, Florida, and New Jersey, which took place concurrent with the book fair, "many people started asking us about them," said Waters. "We discussed what is happening politically and economically in the United States. How working farmers throughout the country are being forced to new levels of struggle by the policies of the government. How they are being forced to consider new explanations for the perfidy of that government. How all this is broadening their scope in considering allies."

"We talked to many in Cuba about the way the bosses continue unremittently to increase the exploitation of workers here—including the vicious lengthening of the workday and intensification of labor in



Militant/Hilda Cuzco



Militant/Linda Joyce

**Young Socialists leader Samantha Kern and Pathfinder Reprint Project volunteer Linda Jenness. "We are celebrating a convergence of communist workers with party supporters who want to see the books in print and in use, and with young fighters who are drawn to the possibility of a fighting labor movement, and a real organization of young communists run by young communists," said party leader Jack Barnes.**

many branches of production. We explained what workers in the coal mines, in meatpacking, in garment, and elsewhere are experiencing as part of their class. One miner I know recently worked for 47 days straight before he got a day off—47 days straight! People in Cuba expressed utter amazement to hear of the conditions of work here," said Waters.

The Pathfinder president and other speakers said the displays at the book fair of photographs of socialists campaigning vigorously with their literature helped them explain that working people have conquered the use of a significant measure of democratic rights, and political space, to discuss politics.

"Cubans would thank us after these extensive political discussions and say, 'We don't get this kind of information, this picture brought by conscious working people in the United States, from anyone else,'" said Waters.

Many wanted to discuss the clashes outside the meeting of the World Trade Organization in Seattle last December. The Cuban media covered the large demonstrations there, and the brutal attacks against them by teargas-firing cops. So, many people thought the demonstrations must have been progressive.

Communists explained that the protest leaders called for the defense of U.S. imperialist "sovereignty" and targeted foreign governments like that of the workers state in China. For more than a century, the U.S. rulers have always tried to march under seemingly progressive banners, Waters explained. Under the pretense of defending the environment, or the rights of workers in Third World countries, Washington advances its imperial interests, and the Seattle demonstrations provided backing for exactly that course. Working people need to act in common, across borders and against the imperialist powers, she said.

#### Support return of Elián González

"The most frequent discussions we found ourselves involved in were about Elián González," said Waters. This six-year-old boy is still being kept in Miami more than four months after he was picked up in the waters off Florida, one of three survivors of an ill-fated attempt to reach the United States. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has ruled he should be returned to his father in Cuba. Some of the boy's relatives in Miami, who oppose the Cuban revolution, are appealing this decision in the courts.

"There is an exceptional unanimity of feeling on this question in Cuba," Waters said. "Indignation at the sight of Elián wrapped in a Yankee flag is near universal," she added, referring to photographs that have been published worldwide. "More and more Cubans have come to see this cruelty for what it is—one more battle in the 40-year war by the U.S. rulers to crush the Cuban revolution. But at the same time there is great confusion. Many people asked us, 'Why doesn't the U.S. government carry out its decision?' Is the 'Miami Mafia'—the name given reactionary groups of Cuban émigrés who oppose the revolution—really that strong?" Some accuse the Clinton administration of "cowardice."

"We spent a lot of time explaining to those who asked our views on this struggle how

class political conflict within the United States is being played out around the case of Elián González," Waters said. An INS ruling is not the same thing as a decision by the Clinton administration, much less the U.S. government, the socialists explained. And there are real divisions within the U.S. ruling class.

"We pointed out that the political center of the problem is Washington, not Miami," Waters remarked. The "Miami Mafia" is largely a creation of the U.S. rulers that they use to support the policies they have decided on. The day it no longer serves the rulers' interests, the "Miami Mafia" will be left high and dry.

U.S. president Clinton has played his hand well from the perspective of the class interests he defends. He carefully emphasizes support for the "professionalism and integrity" of the INS, not the ruling on Elián itself, and expresses confidence that the right decision will eventually be reached because in the United States the rule of law prevails—implying, of course, that there is no rule of law in Cuba.

#### Seek to improve image of 'la migra'

The big majority of working people in the United States believe Elián should have been returned to his father in Cuba the day he was rescued from the sea. So the INS and the forces Clinton represents are trying to use this case to improve the image of the immigration cops among workers, to give *la migra*—as the INS is known—a more "human face."

"Some Cubans wondered why there have been no large demonstrations in the United States supporting the INS ruling to send Elián home," Waters noted. "We explained to them that 'la migra' is the largest federal police force in the country, and is detested by class-conscious working people for its brutal enforcement of the bosses' policies—raiding factories in search of undocumented workers, dividing families, and denying

Continued on Page 14

Also from Pathfinder

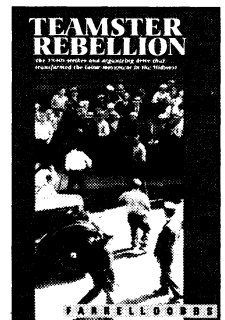
#### Teamster Rebellion

Farrell Dobbs

Tells the story of the 1934

strikes that built an industrial union and a fighting social movement in Minneapolis. The first in a series of four books,

written by a leader of the communist movement in the U.S. and organizer of the Teamsters Union during the rise of the CIO. \$16.95



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

# Auto workers hold mass rally in England

## Continued from front page

years at Land Rover in Solihull, said, "We're here for ourselves as well as for Longbridge. Even though Ford has bought Land Rover we're not sure of our future."

Workers' anger on the march was directed at BMW and the Labour government of Anthony Blair. Among the many homemade placards were: "BMW Betrayed Midland Workers," "BMW Bastards Mustn't Win," and "Blair don't care." A worker from Cowley Rover plant described how just three months ago Rover workers from all over the country were bused to Longbridge to see the new investment at the plant and told how this showed the company's "commitment" to the United Kingdom. "This is why everyone feels so betrayed" he said.

In 1998 Rover workers agreed to massive productivity increases demanded by BMW in return for keeping Longbridge open. These included a "Collective Working Time Flexibility" agreement that provided for employees to work up to 200 hours in excess of their standard workweek without pay, the excess hours to be banked and drawn off during slack periods.

"They were holding a gun to our heads," said John Clune. Nigel Robbins added, "We've been working 12-hour shifts for the past six months, and have been bused down

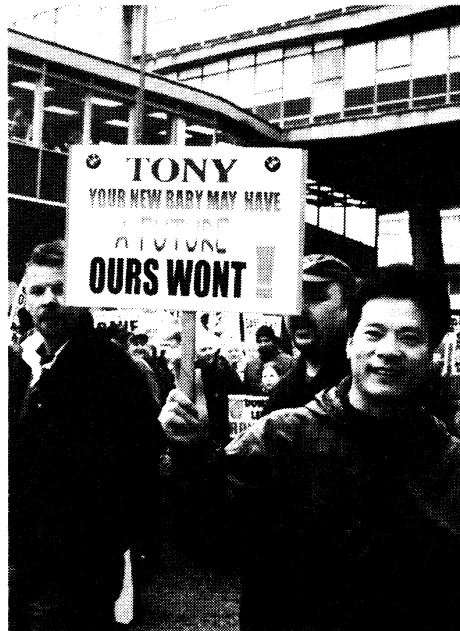
to Cowley every day, and this is the thanks we get."

Official placards issued by the unions representing Rover workers read, "BMW No Go," "Support British Manufacturing," and "Defend British Jobs," this last one written in both English and German.

This chauvinistic stance, promoted by the union officials, was reflected in the demonstration, where a few workers carried the Union Jack and English flags. Media reports often focused on such nationalist responses. For example, the Sunday *Independent's* front page photograph was of a homemade placard reading, "50,000 jobs to go and still Blair won't put on his British overalls."

## Support from workers in Germany

A message of support from BMW workers in Berlin was initially booed by some demonstrators. Anthony Woodley, union negotiator for the TGWU, pointed out from the platform that "we sometimes confuse German workers with their bosses and the German government," and the message then received applause. Hans Koebrick, a worker from BMW's plant in Berlin, traveled to Birmingham. "This is a bad decision by BMW management," he said. "They don't care about destroying thousands of jobs. Although I am not directly affected, I want to



Militant/Phil Waterhouse

**Prime Minister Anthony Blair was among the targets of the protest.**

show my support for Longbridge and also I could be involved in the next crisis." Another German auto worker carried a sign reading, "BMW and Rover workers unite." He said he was well received by Rover workers.

"We blame the government as much as BMW," said Nigel Robbins and Carl Lanchester, both workers at Longbridge. Robbins and Lanchester were part of a vocal group carrying a life-size effigy dressed in BMW overalls with cardboard axes and knives stuck in its back. On the front of the head was a picture of Prime Minister Blair and on the back a picture of BMW chief Joachim Milberg.

"We've got to get Blair to care," Robbins said, "and get him to stop selling Longbridge off to old granny-bashers like Moulton." This last comment refers to the attempted closure of an old peoples' home by Alchemy director Jon Moulton, in contravention of its conditions of sale.

"The government should do what happened with Renault in France," said a Longbridge worker. "They bought half of it and ran it as a going concern." He and a friend were carrying a banner saying "Rover in, Blair in, Rover out, Blair out."

"This country's a soft touch," said Stuart, a carworker from Merseyside. "There's no workers protection. It's easier to sack workers here than in Europe." TGWU general secretary William Morris warned the gov-

ernment that problems in the car industry were a "wake-up call," saying that rising hostility from workers will translate into electoral problems.

"The government would be shortsighted if it operates on the notion that its core voters have got nowhere to go," he said. Loud booing greeted the mention of Anthony Blair's name by a local Member of Parliament (MP) at the rally. Nonetheless, Blair the next day ruled out government intervention to save jobs. The government insisted that it wasn't leaving workers in the lurch but saw its role as "managing transition" rather than intervening to save businesses.

The Birmingham action came on the same day that Honda announced plans to cut car production at its plant near Swindon by more than 50 percent. The company said that none of the 3,100 workers would lose their jobs. They blamed slowing European demand, the strength of the pound, and weak sales in Britain for this decision.

## Ford threatens layoffs

Last month, Ford announced that it will go down to one shift in August at its Dagenham plant, with the loss of 1,500 jobs. It threatened to close the factory altogether to reduce "unacceptable losses" unless industrial relations and productivity were improved.

In fact, workers there walked out in a one-day strike over company racism and bullying last October for only the first time in 10 years. A survey by the *Economist* last year found the plant to be the most productive Ford center in Europe.

A Ford official was quoted in the *Guardian* newspaper as saying that Dagenham workers are "aggressive, insular and backward." Commenting on the possible closure, Nick Scheele, the head of Ford in Europe, said, "In business, sometimes you just have to do what you have to do."

In 1998, Ford chief executive Alex Trotman told the Confederation of British Industry conference, "The world auto industry has overcapacity of about 40 percent. Excess capacity is the equivalent of 80 modern, high volume assembly plants sitting idle."

In a clear signal of the plans of Ford and other car bosses in Europe, he added, "We are running a business in a tough sector. We have to do what is necessary."

*Caroline Bellamy is a member of the TGWU at Ford Dagenham. Phil Waterhouse contributed to this article.*

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

### MASSACHUSETTS

#### Boston

**U.S. Navy Out of Vieques, Puerto Rico.** Speakers: Hans Perl-Matanzo, director, Harvard Students for Peace in Vieques Now; Rafael Rodríguez Cruz, representative Todo Connecticut Con Vieques; and Linda Marcus, Socialist Workers Party and member United Transportation Union. Fri., April 14, 7:30 p.m. *Pathfinder Bookstore, Codman Square, 683 Washington St. Dorchester (two blocks south of Codman Square).* Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 282-2254.

### PENNSYLVANIA

#### Philadelphia

**Reportback from the Latin American and Caribbean Students Congress in Cuba.** Hear a panel of participants reporting on this meeting. Fri., April 14, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6:00 p.m.

**What's Behind the High Cost of Fuel and What Can Workers and Farmers Do About it?** Speaker: Connie Allen, Socialist Workers Party, member of Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. Fri., April 28, 7:30 p.m. *Both events to held at 711 E. Passyunk Ave. (Two blocks south of South St.).* Donation: \$4. Tel: (215) 627-1237.

### Australia

#### Sydney

**Fight Racist Attacks! Oppose Mandatory Sentencing! End Detainment of Refugees!** Speakers: Doug Cooper, member Communist League and Maritime Union of Australia, and others. Fri., Apr. 14, 7:30 p.m. *176 Redfern St.,*

## CALENDAR

### NEW JERSEY

#### Trenton

**Stand Up for Choice 2000.** Sat., April 15. Gather at 11:00 a.m. Hughes Justice Complex, march to New Jersey Statehouse steps. Rally 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. *For more information, contact National Organization for Women of New Jersey (609) 393-0156. 110 West State St. Trenton, N.J. 08608. Website: www.nownj.org*

### ILLINOIS

#### Chicago

**Reportback on Visit of U.S. Farmers to Cuba and Discussion of the Fight of Black Farmers against Discrimination.** Speaker: Eddie Slaughter, farmer, vice president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association. Fri., April 14, 6:00 p.m. *Cultural Center, Room #304, Stewart Building, 2311 N. Clifton, DePaul University (one block south of Fullerton, one block east of Racine).* Sponsor: Activist Student Union.

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

**National Day of Solidarity with the People of Vieques.** Wed. April 19, 12:00 Noon. In front of the White House. One year anniversary of killing of David Sanes in Vieques as a result of a Navy F-18 aircraft dropping a 500 pound bomb. A series of local actions will build for the event. *For more information, contact David Santiago: (202) 223-3915 ext. 308.*

*Redfern. Donation: \$4. Ph: (02) 9690 1533.*

### New Zealand

#### AUCKLAND

**Reportback and Slideshow from the Havana Book Fair.** Speaker: Ron Poulsen, participant in the Pathfinder stall at the Ninth International Havana Book Fair. Fri., Apr. 14., 7:00 p.m. *La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road.* Donation \$3. Tel (9) 379-3075.

### CHRISTCHURCH

**Eyewitness Account of the Cuban Revolution Today.** A report from a Pathfinder Press representative at the Havana International Book Fair. Sat., April 15, 7:00 p.m. *Gloucester Arcade, 129 Gloucester St.* Donation: \$3 Tel: (3) 365 6055.

### Britain

#### London

**Eyewitness Reportback from Farmers' Protests in Ireland, Wales, and England.** Fri., April 14, 7:00 p.m. *47 The Cut.* Donation: £2.

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**Shucks**—Contrary to an earlier announcement, Jane Fonda will not auction off the designer dress she was slated to wear to the Academy Awards. “I’ve fallen in love with it,”



Harry Ring

she explains. Proceeds from the sale of the dress would have gone to her project, the Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention.

Anyone feel sick as a dog?—

Despite the persistent reports of poisoning from contaminated food, the feds are recommending further cutbacks in inspection. Plants with “lowest risk” would be skipped and the food turned out by the high-risk companies would be subjected to “random” checks. Why the further cutback? The present inspection system, they fret, costs the food barons an estimated \$19 million for inspectors’ overtime pay.

**P.S.**—The feds announced that the Sara Lee food company is recalling 34,500 pounds of Ball Park hot dogs in 15 states. Investigators had spotted the deadly listeria bacteria in the franks. Sara Lee emphatically denied any link to the recall 16 months ago of

meats responsible for 21 reported deaths.

**The rush for the buck**—“Scientists have uncovered what they believe are glaring errors in a patent issued last month to Human Genome Sciences, Inc. for a human gene that plays a crucial role in AIDS. The potential setback comes amid concerns that the race to patent human genes could lead to shoddy science and profiteering.”—News item.

**Do both? Wadya, some kinda nut?**—Idaho’s attorney general wants a court order requiring some school districts to redirect spending funds on educating students to solving health problems posed by crum-

bling buildings.

**Besides, it’s jolly**—When Bank of America took over NationsBank in 1998 it said the “merger” would result in the loss of 5,000 to 8,000 jobs. Actually 12,600 people have been fired so far. Explains a B of A spokesman: “The initial projection was conservative.”

**They surely love those kids**—Seventeen classrooms at a North Hollywood middle school were temporarily closed for a cleanup of lead contamination. The poisonous lead residue had accumulated on window ledges and floors from lead-based paint on walls drilled during renovations. Two other Los Angeles area schools were closed for the removal

of the carcinogen, asbestos.

**Love them landlords**—“In San Francisco, minimum-wage workers would have to toil 146 hours a week to pay the average rent on a two-bedroom apartment.”—*Los Angeles Times*.

**No portathrone**—Three tons of luggage and an entourage of 32 people accompanied the Queen of England and Duke of Edinburgh on their two-week trip to Australia. The queen is traveling with her own feather pillow, kettle, and supply of bottled water. Myth to the contrary, she does not travel with her own toilet seat. An official assures: “A private rest room is always provided wherever she goes.”

## U.S. rulers have less ‘need’ for labor officials today

The excerpt below is taken from “So Far From God, So Close to Orange County: The deflationary drag of finance capital,” a talk presented to a regional socialist educational conference held in Los Angeles over the 1994-95 weekend. The entire talk appears in *Capitalism’s World Disorder: Working-class Politics at the Millennium*. Copyright © 1999 Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES

Since at least the end of World War II, there has never been a time in the United States when the employing class thought they needed the trade union bureaucracy less than they do today. Thus the top AFL-CIO

### from the pages of *Capitalism’s World Disorder*

officialdom has less leverage in the Democratic Party and capitalist two-party system. Never have prominent bourgeois politicians of either party made less pretense of concessions to the top AFL-CIO officialdom. Never has less attention been paid to their wish list of “labor legislation.” They get fewer invitations to the White House, to testify before Congress, or probably even to play golf at country clubs of the rich. They more and more try to merge their unions, capable of doing little else. Their slogan seems to be “One Big Dues Base”—almost like a cruel parody on the old Wobblies.<sup>1</sup>

The labor bureaucrats argue among themselves more these days as well, accusing each other of responsibility for their fallen estate. And since they accomplish so little, they live in mounting fear and hatred of the ranks, who might at any time elect someone else to replace them in office.

That is why, among other things, trade union officials have begun to approach workers such as yourselves, whom they peg as activists and radicals, to try to draw you into union structures they dominate. They need you more right now. They are looking for activists who have authority in the ranks. They count on militants being frustrated and thus initially seeing any change as perhaps a step forward. And they count on the petty-bourgeois radical left in the labor movement doing their bidding for a very small fee, and

hopefully bringing some militant-minded workers along with them.<sup>2</sup>

The officialdom’s overtures are a diversion from what class-conscious workers need to be doing, and from what we have substantial political space to accomplish in the unions today. We need to be working together in whatever ways possible with others in the ranks. That is where the power and the determination will come to make real changes in the labor movement as struggles pick up—changes that go well beyond the plans of the more left-talking officials.

❖  
Karl Marx put it this way nearly 130 years ago in the final sentence of the resolution “Trade Unions: Their Past, Present, and Future” that he proposed for adoption by the International Working Men’s Association, the First International. The unions, Marx said, “must convince the world at large that their efforts, far from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of the down-trodden millions.”<sup>3</sup>

Think about the people you admire and seek to emulate: take, for instance, Farrell Dobbs, the greatest communist class-struggle leader of the labor movement in the United States; or Malcolm X; or Nelson Mandela. The true leaders of the oppressed and exploited have never addressed themselves to the bourgeoisie, to the oppressors, to complain about what *they* are doing to us. Leaders talk to fellow workers, fellow fighters about where *we* are messing up; what *we* have to do; what *we* have to prepare for. Leaders explain how *we* have to increase our discipline, change our view of ourselves, and much more in order to accomplish our ends.

The bourgeoisie puts on a pretense of being the class that bears intelligence, culture, politeness, civility. But in volatile times such as these, their pretense turns to ashes in their mouths. They are in fact only the parasitic bearers of surplus value—of a part of the fruits of the working day they steal from the labor of our class! And we begin to understand that the most important idea that revolutionists such as Farrell Dobbs, such as Malcolm, can teach us is not about *them*—not about the exploiters—but about what *we* can accomplish together, and about what weaknesses we need to overcome in order to do so. As Malcolm once put it, that is why his goal in building a revolutionary organization was not to awaken Afro-Americans to their exploitation but “to their humanity, to their own worth.”

Those of us who grew up in the postwar period are acquainted with what has been known as the Democratic Party “labor-liberal coalition.” It grouped together—under the political awning of the Democratic Party—the AFL-CIO officialdom, the leaderships of the NAACP and other major civil rights groups, and executive officers of public and private welfare agencies. Today, that coalition is scarcely a shadow of

<sup>2</sup> The union tops seek to draw not only militant workers behind their bandwagon, but radicalizing student youth as well. In 1996 the AFL-CIO recruited some 1,200 students to a “Union Summer” to train them in “community and labor organizing,” i.e., first and foremost, helping to get out the vote for the Democrats in the November 1996 elections.

<sup>3</sup> This resolution drafted by Karl Marx is included in *Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay* by Leon Trotsky (New York: Pathfinder, 1990), p. 35.



Malcolm X interviewed at a May 8, 1963, civil rights demonstration. Revolutionists like him can teach us “about what we can accomplish together, and about what weaknesses we need to overcome in order to do so.”

its former self. Nor does it have the appearance of any substantial weight in bourgeois politics. For the Communist Party and the rest of the petty-bourgeois left in the working-class movement in the United States, this is cause for great sorrow and lamenta-

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



April 18, 1975

PORTLAND, Ore—This city’s first public inquest into a police murder of a Black youth turned into a whitewash of the death of Rickie Johnson, a seventeen-year-old high school student.

On March 14, Portland cop Kenneth Sanford shot Johnson in the back of the head in an unoccupied house in North Portland. Sanford had entered the house disguised as a cab driver, holding his gun in a brown box supposed to contain Chinese food ordered at the house. Sanford hoped to entrap anyone within into attempting a robbery. Two days earlier a cab driver was allegedly robbed delivering a food order to the same address.

Sanford was ordered to shoot to kill if an armed robbery attempt was made. After entering the house, Sanford shot twice, hitting Johnson in the back of the head. He claimed that Johnson held a gun.

In addition to the murder of Johnson, there have been three other police killings of Blacks in the city in the last six months.

Under the pressure of a demonstration at police headquarters and demands from organizations such as the Portland State Black Student Union, the NAACP, the Albina Ministerial Alliance, and the Urban League, an inquest was finally scheduled for April 2.

About 400 people, mostly Blacks, attended the hearing. The size of the crowd was a strong indication of the support for the demand that Sanford be dismissed from

the force and brought to trial for murder.



April 17, 1950

NEW YORK, April 14—Two of the Trotskyist leaders in the Soviet-controlled zone of Berlin, Oskar Hippe and Walter Haas, have been seized by Stalin’s secret police and face execution, Farrell Dobbs, national chairman of the Socialist Workers Party, announced today. Dobbs appealed to all labor and liberal organizations in the country to protest the arrest of these working class leaders and demand their release from the prison camps in the Soviet Union where they are held by the MVD.

From information just received from their friends in Berlin, Hippe and Haas were arrested late in 1948 by the Russian occupation forces and thrown into concentration camps. Both were well-known among Berlin workers for their decades of activity as revolutionary socialists in the German labor movement and their unimpeachable records of struggle against the Nazis.

The action of Stalin’s secret police against these working class militants is all the more atrocious because both men suffered terribly from the Nazi terror. Oskar Hippe was three times arrested and tortured by the Nazis and imprisoned for two years in the internment camp at Luckau. Walter Haas was condemned for high treason by the Nazis for his role as a leader in the underground Trotskyist organization at Berlin. He spent three years in prison.

# Socialists register progress in party building

Continued from Page 11

education, food, and health care to the children of immigrants.

"We explained why it is not in the interests of working people in the United States that the INS strengthen its prerogative to issue administrative rulings that cannot be challenged in the courts," noted Waters. "That is what the U.S. rulers have been trying to establish in law since Clinton signed the immigration reform bill in 1996, and they hope to advance this reactionary course one more step under cover of the case of Elián González, whose return the majority of Americans know is just.

So the most class-conscious workers oppose the game being played by Clinton and the INS, at the same time they detest the government's callous use of an innocent child to advance its class goals and demand that Elián be reunited with his father and his homeland.

"We kept explaining that in the imperial United States, a powerful, 'decisive' executive branch is not something in the interests of working people. Far from being progressive, it is our great historic enemy, worldwide. It doesn't matter whether or not Clinton is a coward. The problem is that individuals like him, with his character structure, are astute defenders of the imperialist rulers they serve.

"Some people argued with us that we were wrong," Waters noted. They thought the reason Elián is still in Miami is that this is a presidential election year, so the money and votes from the reactionary Cuban émigrés living in Florida are determining government policy.

Many others had a different response.

"What you have to say is so important for our perspectives," said a professor at the University of Havana after a discussion of these points," Waters reported. She went on: "I even found myself starting to think that Clinton is a good guy, though I know better. Imagine the confusion my students—who haven't lived through the same political experiences—must be facing!"

"People were especially interested to hear about the 'other Miami,'" said Waters, pointing to the truckers who slowed freight to a trickle in the port of Miami in early February, and the tens of thousands who protested on March 7 in Tallahassee to defend affirmative action programs in the state of Florida.

## On to Tehran!

A theme of each meeting was looking forward to more possibilities to reach out with communist books to workers and youth in the front lines of struggle around the world. The next international effort along these lines is the annual book fair in Tehran, the capital of Iran. The fair, one of the gains of the popular revolution of 1979, will be held in May. In the past it has attracted up to 2 million visitors. A team has represented Pathfinder at this huge book fair for the last eight consecutive years.

"On to Tehran!" said Waters, in concluding her presentation.

In his remarks to the three meetings, Barnes also discussed the place of Pathfinder books in the world class struggle. He emphasized how the communist movement in the United States is responding to the kind of political changes that Waters and others who attended and reported on the book fair in Havana had described.

Barnes said he vividly recalled being present when Guevara presented the first talk printed in *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, delivered at the opening session of the First Latin America Youth Congress on July 28, 1960. Thousands of revolutionary-minded youth traveled to Cuba in the first years of the revolution. Many were as ignorant as he when they arrived, Barnes said. "And many were won to a communist course by the example of Cuba, by what workers and peasants there did, and by the kind of leadership we discovered there.

"On my right, in the audience that night was a young anarcho-syndicalist from Detroit who spoke more and more like a communist the longer he stayed in Cuba," recalled Barnes. "On my left was a young member of the Communist Party in the United States. He had been arguing with me for days, trying to explain why 'this is not a socialist revolution,'" said Barnes.

That night, for the first time, a central leader of the revolution publicly explained that Cuba's working people were indeed on

a socialist course. "What I am saying to you, young people from throughout the Americas who are diligent and eager to learn, is that if today we are putting into practice what is called Marxism, it is because we discovered it here," Guevara told the audience at the youth congress.

Barnes noted the political changes that make "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War" ring true to growing numbers of revolutionaries in Cuba today. There is "an accelerating openness to discussing these questions among those who are fighting to defend the revolution," he said.

The *New Internationalist* issue was published almost a decade after the major articles in it had been written and adopted by the Socialist Workers Party. Barnes described how Pathfinder's publishing program is necessarily "uneven," like the development of the class struggle. In the wake of the Gulf War, in which Washington carried out a devastating assault on the Iraqi people only to fail in its goal of putting in place a compliant government in Baghdad, "a new edition of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* was published." This incorporated "new material, including an excerpt from the *New Internationalist* entitled 'The Opening Guns of World War III.'"

*The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, first published in 1981, centers on the party's turn in the late 1970s to root the big majority of the membership and leadership of the So-

## Meeting celebrates victory for fund to upgrade printing equipment

By NORTON SANDLER

CHICAGO—Participants in the Chicago meeting on March 26 celebrated the successful conclusion of the effort to raise the capital required to purchase and install a new stitcher in the Pathfinder print shop in New York City. Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes announced that the \$200,000 goal for the Capital Fund launched in mid-January had been surpassed more than a month ahead of the April 30 deadline. A total of \$227,000 was raised by the time the meeting here began.

The Capital Fund is used to finance major upgrades of equipment and the physical plant in the building that houses Pathfinder Press and its print shop, and to help meet Pathfinder's ambitious publishing goals.

Individuals make contributions to the fund from various sources that include windfalls, inheritances, and accident and injury settlements. This particular drive was no exception. Auto workers, coal miners, and other trade unionists donated the bonuses their employers paid in lieu of giving workers wage increases.

Socialist workers consider it a badge of honor to contribute "blood money" like this to the Capital Fund. A Chrysler worker at a Midwest plant kicked in the final \$1,500 before the Chicago meeting opened from a bonus payment he received a few days earlier.

One large contribution covered the \$128,000 price of the new state-of-the-art stitcher that will be purchased later this month, replacing an old piece of equipment far less suited to the needs of the Pathfinder print shop today. A veteran socialist and his attorney contributed \$16,666 they won as part of an auto accident settlement, thus providing the funds to cover the installation of the new piece of stitching equipment.

A stitcher is a machine that collates the components or "signatures" of a book, staples or "stitches" them together, and trims the finished product. The manufacturers of the machine that has been selected offered a price discount, said Barnes, since they want to use the Pathfinder print shop as a Manhattan showcase for their technology. An attractive photo display of the new piece of equipment drew steady attention at the Chicago meeting.

Capital Fund contributions were raised during and after the previous two meetings as well. At the close of the March 5 meeting in New York, a total of \$150,000 had been raised; the figure grew to \$162,000 by the end of the San Francisco event. On the eve of the Chicago meeting, further donations took it over the top to \$227,000!

A significant number of those attending



Pathfinder booth at Havana International Book Fair in February

cialist Workers Party in the industrial working class and unions, after a long period in which such an effort had not been possible. The opening of the new, 1994 edition centered, above all, on the test of the leaders of the turn in face of the imperialist war and Washington's horrible, culminating "turkey shoot," in which it slaughtered tens of thousands of Iraqi soldiers and civilians alike on

the road to Basra.

Through much of the decade that followed that war, the organized labor movement was mired in a retreat. The big political events of that time are captured in *Capitalism's World Disorder*, explained Barnes. But while the main speeches and reports that became chapters in the book

Continued on next page

the three meetings were either working in the shop today or had done so in the past three decades.

With their target for the Capital Fund reached a month ahead of time, Barnes announced that fund organizers were setting a new goal of raising an additional \$250,000 between April 1 and August 1. These funds are badly needed to help offset the high costs the shop is incurring due to dislocation of work as these major pieces of equipment are installed, shop workers begin to learn how to use them in an efficient way, and a long-term customer base that fits the new configuration of the printing equipment is established.

Such costs have been factored into expenses with each upgrade in plant equipment the shop has brought in from a substantial modernization of the physical plant in the early 1990s, to replacing the pre-press department with computer-to-plate equipment, to installation and start-up of a new stitcher.

## Reprinting 75 titles

There are also large expenses coming up for the publishing house this spring and summer as it puts more than 75 Pathfinder titles—an average of three a week—on the presses. Specific time will be scheduled on the shop's presses each week for printing these Pathfinder titles. This means that the presses are not available for commercial work during those slots.

This is the most ambitious printing effort that Pathfinder has ever undertaken. It will require purchase of a big stock of paper and other printing supplies to make this possible. Most of these titles, out of print for several months or longer, are either now completed or being prepared for the presses by the team of some 190 Pathfinder reprint project volunteers around the world. In the first week and a half of April, *Malcolm X: The Final Speeches*, *Fidel Castro on Chile*, and the bulk of the new printing of *Che Guevara Speaks* will be delivered. Nine more titles are scheduled to go on the presses this month alone.

The morning of the Chicago meeting a \$50,000 pledge was made to get this new fund started. Another \$12,000 was raised at the Chicago meeting itself. Two auto workers have since sent in bonuses and an additional substantial contribution brings the fund to a total of \$93,500 pledged toward the \$250,000 goal.

At the Chicago celebration Barnes explained that the victory in raising funds to pay for the new stitcher was coupled with substantial reductions in costs—especially in the Pathfinder print shop.

In the past several years the shop has adopted computer-based technology for tasks ranging from the laying out of the *Militant* to the preparation of plates that go on the print shop presses. A number of labor-intensive tasks have been eliminated, meaning the books can be produced with fewer people. This has released more socialist workers to build the communist movement as members of the Socialist Workers Party's industrial trade union fractions.

Barnes described further progress along these lines. An in-house server is up and running that eliminates the \$8,000 annual fees formerly paid to an Internet service provider company.

Where E-mail is still necessary, steps are being taken to switch over to a web-based program using the high-speed digital connection already installed in the building, he said. Four modems, each of which requires the rental of a dedicated phone line, will be disconnected.

This one step alone will lead to annual savings of \$9,000. Some \$2,000 of the total savings of \$17,000 comes from being able to discontinue subscriptions to publications for proprietary software that has now been eliminated.

These cost savings can be channeled to further improvements in technology and production of books. They are "part of ongoing efforts to improve the efficiency of the books-producing apparatus," said the SWP leader.

## Pathfinder fighting fund

At the Chicago event, participants also donated or pledged \$6,500 to a "Pathfinder fighting fund" launched at the New York meeting and continued in San Francisco to help cover the costs of Pathfinder's publishing and promotional efforts, such as those discussed at the three gatherings. Participants in a meeting held the previous week in Minneapolis to honor Donald Peterson, a veteran cadre of the communist movement recently deceased, contributed an additional sum. At these four meetings a total of \$17,400 was pledged or donated.

This fund is still open for donations. New contributions or pledges can be sent to Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014.

In addition, more than \$6,500 has been generously sent into the *Militant* in response to an appeal for the Books for Cuba fund. The teams that represent Pathfinder at the Havana International Book Fair, and on other occasions in Cuba, draw on this fund to help cover the costs of eagerly sought after donations of books to libraries and other institutions there.



# Immigrant rights

Continued from front page

mostly union officials and organizers, as well as staff and volunteers for advocacy groups for immigrant rights and immigration issues. The gathering attracted a group of Chinese workers organized by Local 23-25 of UNITE whose plant had shut down recently in Chinatown.

AFL-CIO executive vice president Linda Chavez-Thompson, chaired the event. She said reports on this and the next gatherings will be presented to the executive council of the AFL-CIO in August for consideration on the situation facing immigrants.

Presiding over the forum with Chavez-Thompson were Clayola Brown, vice president of the Union of Needletrades, Textile and Industrial Employees (UNITE), Leon Lynch, vice president of the United Steelworkers of America; Dennis Rivera, president of Local 1199 of the Health and Human Service Employees/SEIU; Brian McLaughlin, president of the New York City Central Labor Council; and other top officials of the labor federation in New York.

Workers in asbestos removal companies, bakeries, laundries, nursing homes, janitorial operations, and other jobs were given the microphone to briefly described the organizing drives and union struggles they have been involved in.

Arben Gjoka, a janitor with Local 32B-32J of the Service Employees International Union, spoke in Albanian about the 70 hours a week he was forced to work before he joined the union.

Siaka Diakite, from the Ivory Coast, explained that he worked 60 hours a week delivering loads of up to 100 pounds of groceries, earning \$60 to \$75 a week. He was involved in a drive to organize the workers into the United Food and Commercial Workers union. Most were fired when they went out on strike.

Zonia Villanueva, a house cleaner in Hempstead, New York, explained how co-workers established a cooperative to protect their jobs and fight against the fees domestic workers have to pay to the agencies through which they get hired.

Nadia Marin-Molina, director of the Workplace Project, from Long Island, said

Mexican workers have been fighting to get a safe location where employers can pick them up for work every day without harassment by the police, and spoke about their fight for decent housing. Local legislation starting this month will penalize workers who are caught living in groups of more than five per household.

A presentation at lunch time was made by a member of Local 32B-32J on their fight for a contract with Golden Mark, a building maintenance company in Brooklyn. Eighteen co-workers stood next to him in front of the room while he spoke.

"We have been out for six months," he explained, demanding higher wages and health benefits. The 150, mostly immigrant workers that clean 15 buildings in Brooklyn make around \$6 an hour, below the \$13 an hour average for the unionized workers in the industry. They also lack benefits.

"We came for a better life in this country, we work hard for Golden Mark," he said, "and our fight is to the end."

The shift in policy by the AFL-CIO has given more openings for workers and activists to organized protests in support of immigrant rights. This was evident at the meeting by the flyers and posters circulated by participants or placed near the front door of the forum hall.

Big stacks of posters in Spanish and English were available to help build the 1:00 p.m. demonstration on May 1 in Union Square in Manhattan called by the National Coalition for Dignity and Amnesty for Undocumented Immigrants. Helping to build the May 1 march among garment workers, the UNITE Garment Workers Justice Center in the garment district in midtown Manhattan issued its own flyer calling "for a general amnesty and full rights for all."

## Nurses walk out in Massachusetts



Militant/Sarah Ullman

On March 31 more than 500 nurses, members of the Massachusetts Nurses Association, struck St. Vincent's Hospital in Worcester, Massachusetts. They voted 2-1 in favor of this action after contract talks collapsed. "They need to hire staff," said one nurse on the picket line, explaining that the key issue is mandatory overtime. The Tenet Corporation, which bought the hospital from the Catholic Church three years ago, has reduced staff through attrition. Pickets report that around 30 nurses have crossed the line.

Another "Marcha por la Amnistía" called by the Asociación México-Americana de Trabajadores will be held April 19 at noon at 38th Street and 5th Avenue in Brooklyn.

A young Latino organizer for the Laborer's International Union made sure

that everybody left with a flyer for a "Forum for Dignity and Amnesty." The event is called by the union and will be held at CRRNJ Terminal, Liberty State Park, Jersey City, New Jersey, April 27 at 5:00 p.m.

Paco Sánchez is a member of UNITE.

## Municipal workers strike in Toronto

Continued from front page

other towns two years ago.

CUPE is now bargaining its first contract for the GTA workers and wants wage scales to match the old city of Toronto's union pact.

The mayor says the GTA cannot afford such a settlement. Strikers on the picket line say the old city of Etobicoke had the lowest pay scale and that the mayor wants to set their wages at this lower level.

CUPE negotiators proposed to the city that the issues of harmonization, job security, benefits, and seniority rights be decided by a government arbitrator. The city refused to do so unless it could first define how the 2,800 different jobs at city hall would be classified before an arbitrator intervened. According to press reports, CUPE had agreed to the city's hourly wage increase offer.

Strikers on the picket line say more than 65 percent of union members are women. Patricia MacLeod has worked for the Public Health Department for 12 years. At the picket line at a garbage transfer plant in the north end of the city she spoke about an earlier union fight that she had been part of to win pay equity for women workers doing similar jobs to men. "My wages were raised because of pay equity and now Mayor Lastman wants to harmonize my equity away," MacLeod said. Having already won pay equity based on gender she says it's now a question of "principle" to win regional pay equity.

In the south end of the city on the edge of Lake Ontario, Debbie Edmunds, a licensing officer, walked the picket line at a water filtration plant in the old city of Etobicoke. She said that prior to city amalgamation the Etobicoke workers were not unionized. By joining Local 79 they had a lot to gain in the strike. "Our wages were really low. We hadn't had a wage increase since 1989. We had no union and had unbelievable overloaded job combinations," she stated.

Of the 12,000 full-time workers in Local 79 about 10,000 of them are from the former municipalities outside the old city of Toronto. This means that half the strikers are looking to have their wages raised upward to achieve equal pay.

The 8,000 part-time workers also have a lot at stake in this strike. Linda Klocok, a part-time child-care worker has been employed by the city for five years. She had to wait more than four years to qualify for dental work because of the inferior benefits package that part-timers have.

Anne Dubas, the president of Local 79, said that the rights of part-time and temporary workers are important issues in the strike and that the union "cannot continue to allow our part-time and temporary workers to be used as a cheap labor force."

Daily CUPE strike bulletins are available on the picket lines. On the first day of the strike a bulletin entitled, "We Are Making History" began with the sentence, "This is the largest city strike in Canadian history."

## Socialists register progress in party building

Continued from previous page

were published in party bulletins that—after discussion and adoption by a convention—were publicly sold and distributed, the book that brought them all together was not published until political developments made it possible to write the first chapter, entitled "A Sea Change in Working-Class Politics," and the introduction to the book by Waters.

Retreat of 1990s well behind us

The opening chapter was based on a talk Barnes gave at the closing session of a movement conference in Los Angeles in late 1998 held in conjunction with the Young Socialists national convention. In that conference summary, Barnes noted that the retreat of the labor movement that lasted through much of the 1990s was behind us, that a sea change had already occurred in working-class politics, marking a shift in the "mass psychology" of the working class. A new pattern of struggle was emerging, marked by growing self-confidence and solidarity among clusters of vanguard workers and farmers surprised to discover they are not alone. Events in the class struggle quickly confirmed that view.

The book has had an impact on many who have bought and read it. Barnes quoted the reaction of one working farmer, a seasoned fighter in Oklahoma, who said that until he started reading it, "he had no idea how big the problem he and his fellow farmers faced really was. But that was not the key. The key is the fact that he was not dejected," said Barnes. "Instead, he was relieved to deepen his understanding of this reality. And he looked forward to talking about these ideas to his people, and finding broader layers who want to fight.

"This is the real value of these books," said Barnes, emphasizing the importance of using both *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* and *Capitalism's World Disorder* together.

Throughout the period that is recorded in *Capitalism's World Disorder*, said Barnes, "we had to hold back from acting on the

logic of politics. In a period of retreat the logic of politics can take a long time to be translated into action. Contradictions can be analyzed accurately, but you don't know how long it will be before a struggle to resolve them begins.

"Now it is different," he said. "We are acting on the logic of what has already happened, the change that has already occurred, the resistance that is already there. We act on it before we see all its manifestations—knowing we will find the lines of working-class resistance, if not immediate victories.

"So, now we can do the opposite of what we had to do throughout most of the 1990s."

Several months before the December 1998 conference in Los Angeles, communists had taken initial steps to reorient to the resistance as it developed, and to work together with individuals and groups who were being politically steered by that resistance.

At an Active Workers Conference in Pittsburgh in July 1998, socialists discussed how to begin "Structuring party branches and union fractions through mass work"—as the main banner at the meeting read. "We didn't have any plan for how to do this or how it would unfold," Barnes said. "We started to follow the natural lines of resistance among working people and kept true to our pledge. Like our comrades in Cuba, we weren't afraid of the class struggle, with all its unpredictable twists and turns. We fused our fighting energies with those of other workers resisting the capitalist assault."

As socialist workers have acted along these lines, they have begun to reshape and reorganize their party, a combat organization of the working class, said Barnes. "This now affects every single geographical unit of the party, every trade union fraction, and every member of the party," he said, noting a key component of the transformation of the party is the further proletarianization of the composition and political work of the organization.

SWP branch organizing committees of socialists have been established in St. Louis,

southern Illinois, Wyoming, southern Minnesota, North Carolina, eastern Pennsylvania, and Fresno. A number of socialists have gained jobs in coal mines, and have begun to nationally organize their work as part of a current of miners that is fighting to build and strengthen the United Mine Workers of America.

Other socialist workers are extending fractions in the garment and textile industries and in meatpacking. At the same time, socialists working together in the steel, auto, transportation, and other industries seek to transform their functioning as competent trade union militants and as respected communist workers on the job.

In the single biggest step taken to date, the cadre of the party in New York and New Jersey have reorganized to build branches and industrial fractions along the same lines as the branch organizing committees, which have made progress both in linking up with union and other working-class resistance and in functioning with the norms, habits of discipline, and responsiveness of a proletarian organization.

This is significant because a big part of the membership and leadership of the party is concentrated in this region, many of them working in the print shop or shouldering other national assignments, Barnes noted at the New York meeting. The future of the branches, the Young Socialists, and the print shop are bound up together, he said.

"We are celebrating a convergence," said Barnes. "A convergence of communist workers with party supporters who want to see the books in print and in use, and with young fighters who are drawn to the possibility of a fighting labor movement, and a real organization of young communists run by young communists."

That convergence, moreover, is born of the political changes that have already affected us all and have opened the road. And judging by the young people who staggered away from the secondhand sales tables with their arms laden with stacks of Marxist classics, the direction is even clearer.

## Charleston marchers oppose racist flag

BY LAUREN HART

CHARLESTON, South Carolina—About 600 people gathered in this port city April 2 to launch a 120-mile march to the state capital to demand that the Confederate battle flag be removed from the statehouse.

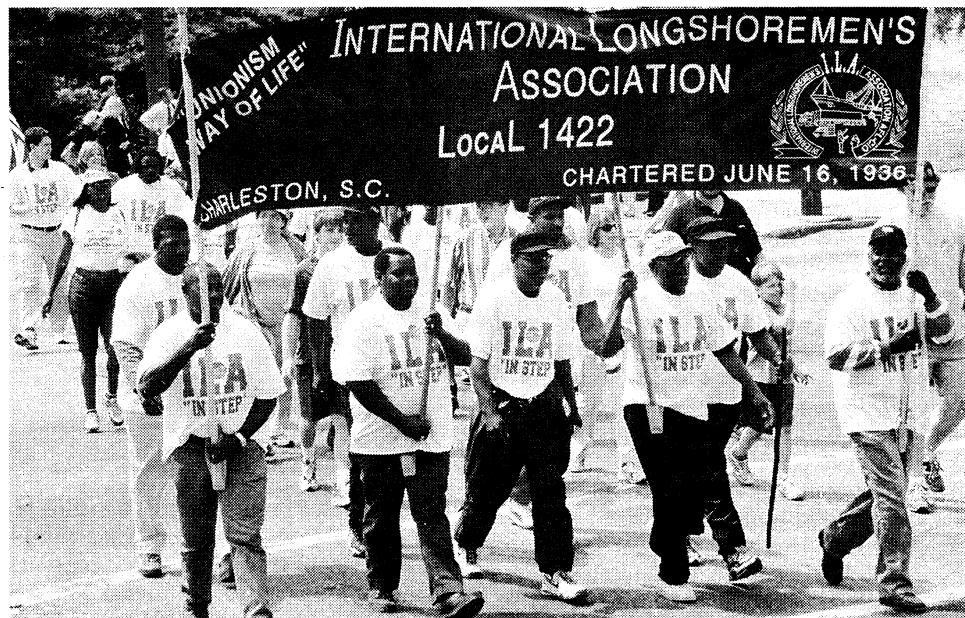
As the marchers passed through the Black community on the first couple of miles of their march, people came out of houses to wave in support. The march will take place over five days, with participants free to join any segment, and will end with a rally at the capitol in Columbia, South Carolina, April 6.

The fight to bring down the flag that flew over the army of the slaveocracy in the Civil War drew national attention after the outpouring of 50,000 people in Columbia on Martin Luther King Day January 17. That action, which was organized by the NAACP, also called for Martin Luther King Day to be recognized as a state holiday, as it is in every other state.

At the start of the year the NAACP launched a national tourism boycott of South Carolina to press the demand for removal of the Confederate flag. This is starting to have some impact, and as the summer months approach a growing number of politicians have taken a stand in favor of moving the racist banner from the capitol dome. It has been flying there below the United States and South Carolina flags since 1962, when it was raised by the state legislature as a banner in opposition to the Black civil rights movement and in defiance of federal civil rights rulings.

The march from Charleston to Columbia was initiated by Charleston mayor Joseph Riley, under the slogan, "Get in step with the people of South Carolina." During the brief program that kicked off the march, Riley recognized former governor John West, Columbia mayor Bob Coble, nine members of the city council, and a number of other politicians and prominent figures who were participating in the action.

His speech expressed the view of this layer of the state's ruling class that maintaining the Confederate flag in its current



Militant/Dave Wulp

### March in South Carolina against the Confederate battle flag

location is an embarrassment that is bad for business in the state. "Without a doubt the vast majority of South Carolinians, white and African American, want the Confederate battle flag to come down," he stated. "Failure of the legislature to act threatens the heritage and legacy of our state."

### 'Our duty' to join the march

Participants ranged from businessmen and teachers to several workers from a nearby hotel who came to the send-off in their work uniforms and then returned to their jobs when the march began. About half of the participants were Black.

The largest organized group present was about 40 members and supporters of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) Local 1422, who came together from their union hall with union banners and special T-shirts reading, "ILA In Step." Busloads of ILA members had taken part in the Martin Luther King Day rally in Columbia, and the local voted to organize members to participate on each day of the five-

day march. "It's our duty" to join in, explained one union member as workers signed up to participate at the union hall the day before.

Glenn Quattlebaum came from Columbia and was selling T-shirts commemorating the march. He planned to participate for the entire action. "I wanted to bring my kids here, to let them see what it takes to have something done in America when you disagree," he said. "You have to see the strength in numbers."

Ann Penick, who is white, is part of the local women's rights group 52 Percent, which recently affiliated to the National Organization for Women. She "came to take a stand and be visible in calling for the flag to come down."

Jennifer Webb, a Black high school student, came with other members of the community service group Youth Service Charleston. "We believe the flag should be taken down," she said, and added that most students at her school agree.

One individual carried a Confederate flag alongside the action, and one other had a sign defending the racist symbol. A small plane flew over a couple of times with a banner reading, "Keep it flying, dump Riley," referring to the mayor. The Confederate States of America Historical Preservation Society has called a rally in support of the flag in Columbia for April 6, the same day the marchers will arrive at the capitol.

### State officials debate moving flag

Since the Martin Luther King Day action, the call for removing the battle flag has been a raging discussion throughout South Carolina and beyond. There is nearly daily debate in the letters columns of daily papers. Democratic presidential candidate Albert Gore said the flag should be moved, while Republican candidate George Bush stated it was an issue for "the people of South Carolina" to decide. Speaking in Columbia March 29, President William Clinton called the flag a "shameful symbol," but did not repeat an earlier call for its removal.

South Carolina governor James Hodges has said that the legislature needs to resolve the flag issue and adopt a Martin Luther King Day holiday before it adjourns in June. He is supporting a proposal to move the flag from atop the capitol dome to a statue of Confederate general Wade Hampton on the statehouse grounds. Hampton became governor of South Carolina in 1876 in an election that marked the defeat of Radical Reconstruction, with terror gangs unleashed against Blacks to prevent them from voting. The NAACP and other opponents of the flag denounced this proposal, as it would leave the flag flying in a very prominent location.

State senators Darrell Jackson, who is a member of the Legislative Black Caucus, and John Courson, a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, are promoting an alternative proposal to place the battle flag in a display case next to a Confederate soldiers monument in front of the statehouse. The

first national flag of the Confederate government and a flag carried in the Union army by a regiment of Black volunteers from South Carolina would also be displayed.

State senator Glenn McConnell, a die-hard flag supporter, wants to fly the flag next to the Confederate soldiers monument, which is at a prominent intersection. McConnell heads a state commission that plans to raise the Confederate submarine *Hunley* from its ocean grave. On March 25 some 2,000 people, many carrying Confederate flags, took part in a funeral procession in Charleston for the recently discovered remains of five members of *Hunley's* crew.

Two days before the Charleston-to-Columbia march began, a conference of 90 historians issued a statement that the Civil War was fought over the issue of slavery, not "states rights." Like the events around the *Hunley* and the Confederate flag, this historical debate is not about the past, but the present-day attempts to roll back the gains won in the fight for Black rights.

At the rally in Charleston, marcher Clarence Chisolm pointed to the long fight for racial equality, going back to World War II. "If they have to keep it, put it where there's a memorial to those who fought in the war," he said. "But not the capitol where it's offensive to so many people."

Many people participating in the kickoff said they or people they knew planned to join in the final rally when the march reaches Columbia April 6, even if they can't walk the whole distance.

## Dockworkers stand firm, defend union

BY LAUREN HART

CHARLESTON, South Carolina—Members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) are keeping up the fight in defense of their union here. Dockworkers are picketing a shipping company that is using nonunion labor on the waterfront, and four workers remain under indictment on charges stemming from a police riot against a demonstration by members of ILA Local 1422 on January 20.

On that day some 600 state, county, and city cops mobilized to allow Nordana Lines to unload a ship with nonunion labor. Since December, the Danish company has been using a nonunion stevedoring company, after 22 years of its ships being unloaded by ILA members.

Initial police charges against eight of the dockworkers were dropped due to lack of evidence, but a state grand jury reindicted four of the workers on felony charges of rioting and conspiracy.

The defense fund set up by Local 1422 to fight these charges has been gaining support from longshoremen and others across the country and internationally, reported Kenneth Riley, president of the local. "We just got a contribution from Sweden," he said. ILA locals from Tacoma, Washington; New Orleans; Savannah, Georgia; and British Columbia are among those that have sent funds. Riley recently addressed the Great Lakes district convention of the ILA and "got a great response."

The union is also holding weekly fund-raising dinners at the union hall on Wednesdays, when workers come by to pick up their paychecks.

Meanwhile, ILA members continue to set up informational pickets each time a Nordana ship comes into port. Court injunctions have limited these pickets to 19 union members. Riley said that ILA members at other ports are refusing to work Nordana ships while the union tries to reach an agreement with the company.

## Brazil: leader of rural landless workers acquitted of murder charge



Peasants occupying Figueira ranch in Brazil confront cops seeking to drive them off

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Jose Rainha, a leader of the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST) in Brazil, was acquitted April 5 on murder charges stemming from a government frame-up during a land occupation by peasants 10 years ago.

Supporters erupted in cheers as the verdict was read and carried Rainha on their shoulders to a nearby square where thousands of others celebrated this victory. Three years ago at his first trial Rainha was convicted and sentenced to 26 and a half years in prison. Prosecutors said they will appeal the most recent verdict.

Land occupations throughout the country are on the rise along with increased confrontations with the police seeking to remove the landless workers from the farms. In a nation of 167 million people, 3 percent of the population owns 66 percent of Brazil's arable land.

At the 1,500-acre Figueira Ranch, for example, 400 landless peasants have been squatting for several months. Some 650 cops attempted to drive them off with tear gas and by firing rubber bullets. They injured 10 people, including six children. But five days later, the peasants returned, more determined to stand their ground.